

BEAVER KINGS AND CABINS



CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER





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BEAVER, KINGS AND CABINS

By

CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER

Here is a vivid account of the romantic adventurers of the American Fur Trade, from the early French cod fishers on the Banks, who erected fur trading posts in Quebec to the English Colonial traders in the Indian towns along the Mississippi and the Arctic posts of to-day. The early French and English traders were not only shrewd and hardy merchants, bartering beads for rich pelts; they were also pathfinders, patriots and imperial scouts. In presenting her original point of view—that it was the Fur Trade which chiefly decided the destiny of the American continent north of Mexico, i.e., whether French or English speech and ideas should predominate—Miss Skinner draws from early and little known trade records. No such comprehensive and picturesque narrative of the rise and development of the Fur Trade in this country has hitherto appeared.

From the early fur traders and their relations with the Indians come glamorous stories of courage and perseverance, which are high lights in the romance of early American history.

Novelist, historian, and poet, Miss Skinner feels intensely the fascination of the Fur Trade, and conveys it in vigorous and colorful writing.



BEAVER
KINGS AND CABINS



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TORONTO

• BEAVER • KINGS AND CABINS

By
Constance Lindsay Skinner

With Illustrations by
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CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER

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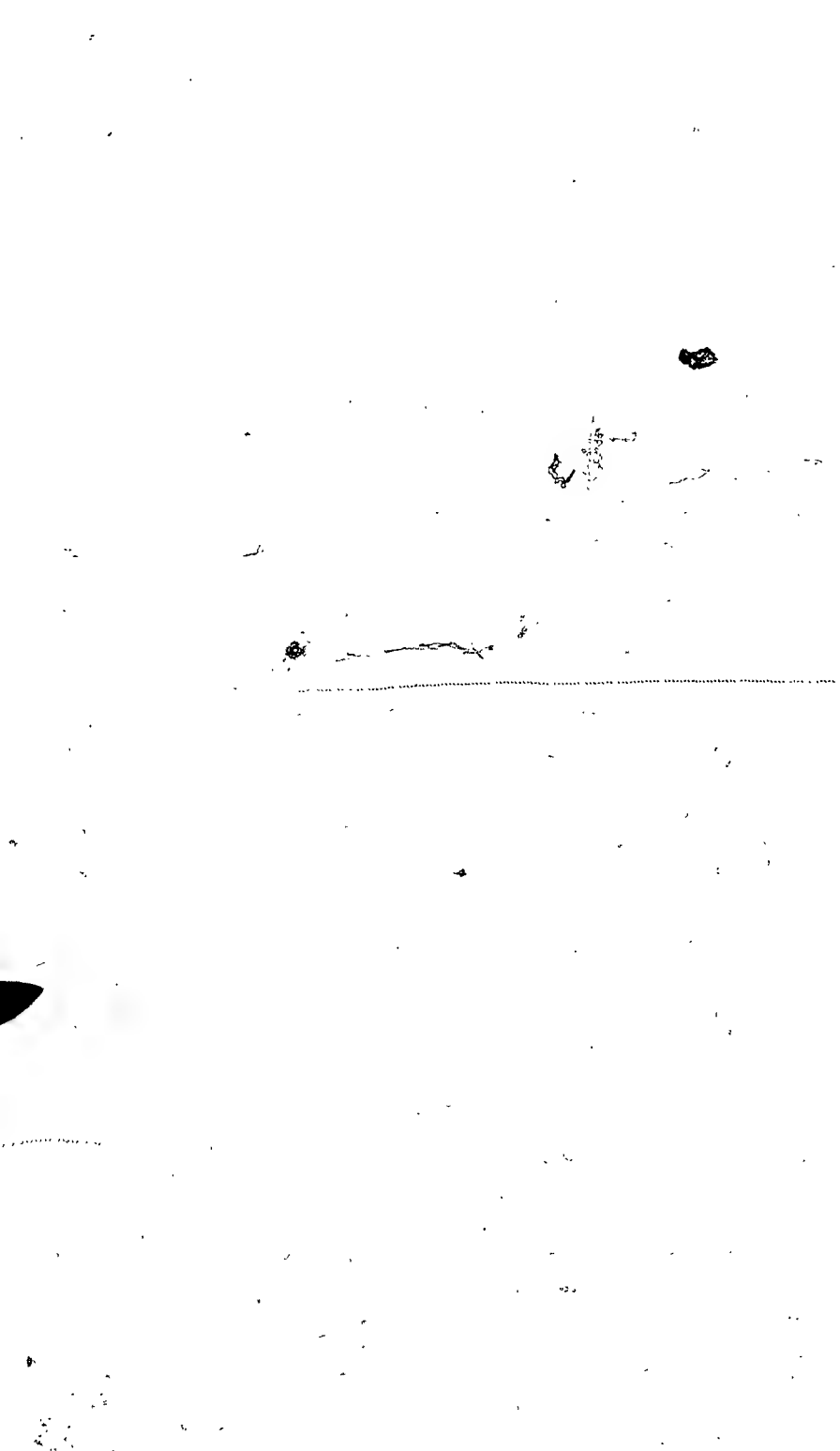
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BEAVER
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CHAPTER I

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

LE RAMIER dipped his beaver cap full of river water and doused the last embers of the camp fire. He poked the blackened sticks to make sure that no sparks remained to flicker and spread on the wind, catch upon the carpet of brown pine needles and blaze a trail across it to the tree trunks. A *voyageur* in the spring and summer when the fur fleet was on the river, in the winter a *coureur-de-bois* or trapper—and, by blood and calling, the son of a long line of these—Le Ramier guarded the forest as a small townsman guards his house. The forest was the home of the fur-bearing animals which gave him his employment and his reason for being; and it was his own home too, for the greater part of each year.

"*Mika mamook klose!*" Chief Trader, Robert James,

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praised him in Chinook, the jargon of the Fur Trade, for his cleverness. Le Ramier swung round on the balls of his feet, elevated his chest and agreed——

"*Nawitka, Tyee!*"—Yes, Chief.

"We'll be able to start in a few minutes now, Tyee," said Ogden Graeme, another trader. "When we reach the canyon the moon will be up full, and give us as much light as we'll get this night." He was a swarthy man with slanting black eyes. His speech was oddly accented by both his Scotch and his Indian heritage and associations. "There is no danger, Mrs. James," he added quickly, noting the strained, anxious expression on Mrs. James' face. The small fair Highland woman stood close beside her husband, with their little daughter. The child held a red and gold book tightly in her mittened hands.

"I'm not afraid for myself," Mrs. James said. "If only my husband would let me go in the lead canoe with him. I fear for him, finding the way through those dreadful rapids at night! They are bad enough by day. But we can only be thankful that Mr. Murray and his brigade joined us in time to tell us about the landslide and the log jam swirling down behind us. We can't wait, of course."

Le Ramier swept his wet cap in a graceful arc and bowed to the little girl.

"No scare, *p'tite mamselle*," he said, softly. She beamed up at him and shook her head vigorously. There was not much of her face to be seen because of the blue-tasseled ermine cap—with six black-tipped tails—which came down to her eyebrows, and the snug collar of her sky-blue flannel and ermine coat. The evening wind was chill on the northern river in the month of May, and ermine was comfortable as well as regal. Never before in her brief expe-

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rience on the river had the canoes and pirogues of the fur brigade shot the canyon rapids by moonlight. She was not afraid, she was thrilled. In her excitement she hugged her "Alice Through the Looking-Glass" closer to her breast.

At the age of six she found reading still rather a slow process; and dusk had fallen and dimmed the page at a moment of high suspense.

They hadn't gone much farther before the blade of one of the oars got fast in the water and *wouldn't* come out again (so Alice explained it afterwards), and the consequence was that the handle of it caught her under the chin, and in spite of a series of little shrieks of 'Oh, oh, oh!' from poor Alice, it swept her straight off the seat. . . .

What if pole or paddle should catch her under the chin and toss her topsy-turvy among the fur bales, or into the wild river! If only she knew where Alice had been "swept" to! Her anxiety on this point was acute. The terrible accident, which had happened to Alice, just as the print faded, was far more fearsome than doing an interesting new thing such as running the rapids by moonlight. She hoped that the aurora, now flickering palely, would become brilliant tonight, to help the moon light her pages—if her mother did not tuck her into the wolylene robe in the depths of the pirogue and make her go to sleep. This was the dread probability.

Now that the fire was out, the boats down below and their crews of French Canadian and Indian *voyageurs* were like shadows cast on the dull moving silver of the river. Only the figure of old Chief Tselistah stood out. His blanket was white and several ermine pelts hung from his cap.

"Tselistah is a snowman!" she cried gleefully. He

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looked to her now like one of the snowmen in her garden at the trading post on winter evenings, when she breathed a space clear on the frosted pane to nod good-night to them—dim formless white mounds in the blue dusk. She loved Tselistah because, in a way, he was her grandfather. He had adopted "Tyee" years ago, when the Chief Trader wasn't a trader at all yet, only a boy of fifteen plunging alone into the North, possessed of nothing but a rifle and a pinto pony all bone and evil. Indians were like that, so Tyee often told her. They would think it a shame to let orphans remain homeless among them. A good hunter could always make a place among the children of his blood for an adopted child. "The heart stretches."

Mrs. James moved away to talk to the wives of the other traders. The child stayed by her father, one hand gripping his coat pocket. She saw Markee, another dear friend of hers, coming toward them, walking a little stiffly. She took it for granted that Markee was an Indian title, like Tyee: they ended with the same sound. Markee was so thin that he looked tall, until he stood between Tyee James and Finnan Murray. The child had heard her mother say that Markee's finely modeled face, its tanned olive skin etched now with many small lines, suggested an autumn leaf; it was so thin that it appeared semi-transparent, as if light would shine through it if it were lifted against the sun. Markee had lived in the North for more than forty of his seventy-two years. In his youth gold was luring men from all parts of the earth to the Caribou District. The poor young Marquis de La Roche, last of his line, had come hoping to strike it rich, so that he could return to France and there assume the state to which his honorable and ancient name entitled

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him. But he was not among the lucky ones. All his "claims" had turned out to be so many holes in the ground. He and Pierre Giraud, his inseparable companion through many years, did a little trapping in the winter woods now, and lived poorly enough by it. Giraud had been nicknamed Pierre L'Ombre, by the *voyageurs* because he was always at the Marquis' heels—other people called him "Shadow Giraud."

To the *voyageurs*, *le marquis* was ever a *grand seigneur*, and the prince of story tellers. By the red flare of pine fires at dusk a procession of heroes in glamorous adventures and humorous escapades trooped from his lips. Charlemagne, Bayard, Francis I, that sly fox Richelieu, Champlain—and many more. But the most popular hero on the river, admired without stint, was the beau ideal of chivalric romance, the white-plumed Henry of Navarre.

"Follow the White Plume!" Quoting Henry's cry gaily, sometimes of a morning, as they scrambled down to the boats, Markee would string out between forefinger and thumb the long straggling white locks which fringed his parchment skull.

"Follow the White Plume!" They would echo him and laugh for the joy and the fun of it. Tst! a leader of soldiers and the heart's dearest of women, this Old One! *Le roi Henri* with legs stiffened by age, his silver coat a flannel shirt patched with flour sacks—Pierre L'Ombre, he patched them!—his velvet cloak a coat of beaver, scarred by the years but still whole!—a good thing for the Old One that beaver would last a lifetime! And the royal banner? No doubt this was the faded old bandana he wore round his neck! *Oh, lon, la!*

"Ah, *messieurs!*" the Marquis exclaimed, as he joined

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the group of traders, with Giraud a step behind him. "What an adventure is before us! At seventy-two it is given me, by the grace of God, to regain my youth through one romantic hour. Perhaps my last hour. For this will be very dangerous. Is it not so? Ah! To step from these tatters into Paradise in a high moment! It is an end worthy of a La Roche, a monarchist and a catholic."

"That's very fine, maybe, for you," Graeme laughed. "But me, I'm a plain earthy fellow; and I say to my *voyageurs*, 'You take me through that canyon safe, understand? Or, by gar, no matter what name they call the place where I meet you hereafter, it's going to be hell for you!'"

"Phut!" Shadow Giraud snapped his fingers contemptuously. "Superstitious fol-de-rols of ecclesiastics and monarchists! I am a young man yet, my friends, only sixty-two—and I expect to eat roast beef at Fort Fraser tomorrow night."

"Pierre, you have the soul of a republican." The Marquis' tone was gently frigid.

"Phut! I am an atheist, a republican and the son of a linen-draper of Lyons. And all this is well for you, Armand. You have the head always in the clouds, and the feet in the paths of ancestral glories that are past. This plain Pierre Giraud, this little man of the people, has saved you from many falls!"

"It is your good heart, Pierre."

They embraced, indifferent to the laughter about them. The continuous bickering of these two devoted comrades had been a laughing matter in the North for thirty years.

"There she comes!" Finnan Murray exclaimed, and pointed to the silver disk now swinging free of the hill top. The greenish white lights of the aurora were waving in

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lengthening lines along the sky. There was a hint of rose at their source on the northern horizon. Murray went on: "Ye'd scarcely believe the sight I saw. 'Twas as if half a mountain of ice and dirt and timber had fallen into the little Ovasco river and smothered it! There'll be a terrible flooding in the next few hours, and all that mighty mass of débris will come down, swirling and churning into the canyon. 'Twould be the end of boats, to be caught in it."

Murray had arrived at Camp Rendezvous, as the meeting place was called, just before supper, with news of a huge landslide in their wake. That was why there could be no sleep for traders and crews tonight at Rendezvous. The *voyageurs* would have been willing enough to unload, draw their boats and canoes ashore, and camp, sing, hunt and dance till the river became clear again, but the furs could not be delayed. Down at Fort Fraser Spanish Don, the muleteer, and his pack train were waiting for these furs. After the furs were sorted and the bales packed on the mules' backs, Spanish Don must drive his train south, over the high mountain trail, down through steep gorges—a month's journey at least; six weeks, probably—to the head of steamboat navigation on the lower reaches of this same river. Pirogues could go no further south on its northern waters than Tyee James' Fort Fraser. The steamboat would then carry the fur bales to the railhead. In Montreal, merchants of the company waited for these furs. They waited for them overseas, in London and Paris, where the furs must arrive in time for the autumn showing. A fortune was at stake. The traders at Rendezvous had decided that, under full moon, they stood a chance of coming safely through the long canyon, which was the worst stretch of the river; and they were taking that chance.

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"I remember when I was a boy," Ogden Graeme said, "there was a big slide into the river and she was blocked for fair. Timbers and brush and whatnot piled up in the channel and swung from rock to rock. By gar! We had to wait till summer and low water, and go in with axes and gunpowder. I wish we hadn't women and children with us—" He broke off as Mrs. James came back to them.

They all went down to the boats now. The little girl in the ermine coat gripped the edge of her father's coat pocket. She heard her mother pleading again with Tyee to take her with him in the canoe, which would go first, to pick out the night trail. Tyee James always led his brigades. And she heard his cool, gentle refusal on the grounds that she might be in the way. The canoe should travel light, with only himself and the necessary crew. For these reasons, he refused her, and not because of danger. There was no special danger, really, he said; one mustn't get that notion just because the thing was "unusual." The child could have told her mother that he would answer so. "Nothing to be afraid of"—he had brought her up thus far on that saying. It was a very good thing for a wilderness dweller to know at the age of six, if possessed of an inquiring mind and sturdy legs able to travel distances in seeking the answers! Nothing to fear now. And Tyee in the lead, showing the way, made it safer for every one. She clutched "Alice" tighter as Le Ramier swung her up over the passavant and set her down in the pirogue behind the white blanketed back of her snowman, old Chief Tselistah. Tyee lifted her mother in, then strode off into the shadows. The Marquis and Giraud climbed aboard, the Marquis retorting gaily to the *voyageurs*, who mocked the slight stiffness of his movements good-naturedly by paying him exaggerated

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compliments upon his agility. Giraud said, "*phut! phut!*" A product of the Age of Reason, as he preferred to describe himself, he scorned all such "embroideries."

She stood up to look first into Graeme's pirogue ahead, and then into Murray's behind. Tyee's canoe was moving. She could see the lantern affixed to the stern. The other canoes floated out to follow it. Graeme's Indian wife and his ten-year-old son were among the bales in his pirogue. She could see only their dark outlines. The two red-haired, blue-eyed daughters of Finnan and Flower Murray leaped into their boat, and their mother swung over the passavant as easily after them. She stood for the moment, or two, while Finnan spoke to the steersman before he boarded the pirogue. She was very tall, six feet in her moccasins, strong and pliant, with beautiful features and the true Indian eyes—almond-shaped, deep set, and black with light-flooded pupils. Her blood was part Cree and part Highlander; and all of it was proud blood. She was an utterly fascinating sight to the small girl in Tyee's boat, who hoped that Flower would visit her parents a long time at Fort Fraser. Finnan was going on to Scotland. He was taking their two very white-looking little children to live with his own grand people in Edinburgh where they would be "educated" and become "civilized." They would never come back to their home up the river. So Flower was really saying goodbye to her little girls forever. There seemed to be some reason why Flower, herself, could never go to Scotland to stay with the grand people who were to have her little girls.

The pirogue bumped off from the shore. Tyee's small daughter would have tumbled flat, if the Marquis had not caught her.

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"Ah! See, then!" he cried, and pointed to the band of sky reaching before them down the canyon. The white streamers of the aurora were waving there, over the narrow rock gateway to the bad water. "The White Plume! We go to glorious conquest, when Navarre's spirit comes to lead us. Follow the White Plume!"

The *voyageurs* took up the cry merrily. It passed from crew to crew. The boats, one after another, slipped between the jagged columns of rock into the roaring rapids. The *voyageurs* sang on any water; they were singing to-night, though their gay courage was strained by the new hazard. The aurora became more brilliant; rose dyed the White Plume, and the rapids ran fire. The bright flashing was a doubtful aid. It gave more light, but it was a flickering light, darting and receding and confusing.

It failed to illumine the pages of "Through the Looking-Glass." The little girl was obliged to close her book with anxiety still heavy upon her as to the fate of Alice after the oar bumped her under the chin and upset her. She drowsed with the book in her arms.

Some time later she was awakened suddenly by a heavy splash of water on her face. She heard one half stifled sound of terror from her mother, who had grasped her to prevent her from rolling out of the boat. She realized almost immediately that they were not moving, which seemed very odd on that swift river, and then she saw a black wall rearing over her. They were hanging aslant on a huge rock, and dipping water. The crew cursed and shouted warnings up stream to those behind them. Finnan Murray's pirogue came racing down the narrow channel and

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only escaped ramming the stranded boat by the quick action of his men on the passavant, who thrust their poles against the rock and swung their own boat free. They grazed another rock on the other side of them but kept afloat, and the furious current sped them on. It was not possible for them to stop, or to render any assistance. Each vessel on this mad river must look out for itself. Tyee's pirogue swayed and shivered, slid a little, but still hung fast. Le Ramier jumped over the rim on to the jagged crest of the rock. How his moccasined feet clung to the granite surface, or to some crevice in it, only Le Ramier knew. He waited an instant for the upward swirl of the tide, as it broke and leaped, then he thrust with all his great strength, and the pirogue dropped free on the downward suction of the eddying wave. The current was so swift that the craft was gone before he could lay hand on it. He was left on the rock, and no one could help him. But Le Ramier had been prepared even for this! As soon as he had felt the boat loosen to the thrust of his pole, he had dropped the pole and leaped. His body shot, swooping, over the chasm of water, like an eagle pouncing for a hare, and landed in the pirogue. Shouts of acclaim greeted him. In their frenzy of admiration his comrades cursed him magnificently. His teeth and eyes flashed with pride. He strutted on the passavant, throwing out his broad chest.

"If any other man on the river had done it," he said, in French, "even I, myself, would praise him. But, for Le Ramier, this was not much!" He reached for an extra pole and went to his work.

"Oh, Le Ramie! *Mika mamook klose!*" the little girl called to him, because that was what Tyee always said to

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one of his men who did anything brave or clever, and she thought someone should say it now. The *voyageurs* laughed and echoed her.

"*Mika mamook klose!*" Though, literally translated, the words were only, "You work good," the Chinook phrase meant very high praise.

"T'ank, *p'tite mamselle!*"

She returned to the task of drying Alice with the Marquis' bandana.

The aurora had ceased, and only the moon's steady, if dimmer, glow lighted the fleet through the last rock-strewn passage and on into the broader channel. Tyee James, looking back, could count the dark objects in his wake and know that all the vessels of his brigade had come through safely. The shrill tones of his flute pierced the silence with a sailor's chantey. His crew sang. Every one on the river launched into the theme with wild exhilaration. Murray, Graeme and Mrs. James sang the English words and the others sang a French version of their own.

Oh, blow ye winds, heigho!
A-roving we will go—

Over and over again, they sang it. The moon set and darkness covered them. The flute led them into another melody, one dear to every *voyageur's* heart—*A la claire fontaine*.

Luy a longtemps que je t'aime
Jamais je ne t'oublierai

It was as if the refrain became the current on which they floated through the darkness. Just before sunrise they pulled in to shore for breakfast and an hour's sleep after it. While fires were being lighted and food prepared, old

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Tselistah stood apart and faced the east, waiting for the sun. As soon as it came into view, he began to chant the ancient morning prayer of the chiefs of his tribe.

Supreme One! Mighty Spirit! Ruler of my life!
Thou comest riding on the ray of dawn
And makest me live in gladness by thy light.
Thou see'st me, small, weak and helpless,
And sheddest thy beam of love on me.
'Tis thus today, and every day, swift death is cheated;
I know that I shall live.
Stooping, thou wilt lift me up and bless me,
And I shall know that thou art close beside me.
All the ways I go.
And every look of mine, this day, shall be a look of thine,
For I must wear thy face:
Every word shall be a word of thine,
For I can speak no words but thine.

He raised his hand and touched the breast of his white son, who stood beside him.

"I will tell you again," he said, "what I have often told you before. Because wisdom cannot be repeated too often. The chief's prayer is a strong prayer. All my life I have prayed this prayer each day at sunrise; and, though I am a very old man, I have kept strong and well, and all my senses are as keen as the senses of a young man. Yet I am old. My sons were fathers already when I took you to be my son. You remember that you were ignorant and helpless, and I taught you the wisdom of my people: how to hunt and trap, how to find a trail, to know north from south, and berries and roots that are good to eat from poisonous ones, and many other things which we have learned from the earth and the animals and the stars. But the wisdom, which comes to us from Supreme One, is even

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more important. Do not forget this spiritual wisdom, which I have taught you. It is stronger than the other."

"I remember it," Tyee answered.

Soon after they started they heard singing ahead of them, and presently saw a fleet of Indian canoes. The Indians had come down a tributary stream, flowing in from the west. They too were bringing their season's catch to Fort Fraser. The little girl's eyes filled with tears every now and again, while she pursued the great adventure with Alice. Her book's gorgeous red and gold cover would never be the same again. In spite of all her careful mopping with the Marquis' bandana, Alice would carry the stain of wild water to her death.

The brigade halted again at noon for food and two hours' sleep. The dusk would find them at their journey's end, where they could sleep away the night and the next day as well. Here the river was quieter than anywhere else, till it neared the sea six hundred miles south. They saw what looked, at first sight, like a large root, partly submerged, floating across the stream: the antlers of a swimming moose.

Gai lon la! gai le rosier
Du joli mois de mai!

The singers' paddles dipped and flashed to the joyous rhythm. The Indian brigade ahead sang also: songs of thankfulness and reverence to the spirits of the four-footed creatures, whose pelts were heaped high in their canoes. The spirits of beaver, muskrat, mink, ermine and marten would be pleased by these songs and would bring their furry kin in plenty, next winter, to the traps of such devout and grateful hunters.

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Sky and the river chasm were ablaze from the setting sun when the boats moored at the fort. The crews swung the fur bales on their backs and climbed the bank to the trading house. Tyee James handed the key of the storehouse to Le Ramier, who accepted it as if it were the sword of knighthood, or a medal for valor. Indeed, it was these, and more. The *voyageurs* considered it the highest honor to be entrusted with the almost sacredly important task of fetching the great roasts of beef for the barbecue. To whom should this honor go, on this occasion, if not to Le Ramier?

"On dit que vous avez fait quelque chose de nouveau hier soir, mon brave," Tyee said.

"Crayez? (croyez)" in a tone of profound surprise; then, with a vast indifference, *"Ma' c'est possib'. Je suis un homme du Nord!"*

("They say you did something new last night, my Brave." "You think so? Well, it is possible. I am a man of the North!")

The Indians of both fleets had their families with them, and the women now set about building the cook fires on the broad grassy bank. The traders, with their families, the Marquis and Giraud, went on to James' house where Chinese cooks were preparing their dinner—Scotch mutton broth, rare roast beef, with potatoes and Yorkshire pudding cooked in the meat pan, side dishes of kidneys boiled in a suet pasty, and brown beans in a style learned from the Spanish-American muleteers, with a dash of wild garlic to liven the flavor; and pies of home-made mince meat topping off what might be described as an adequate meal. The food was already well on the way, because Ah Sing, the youthful cousin of Ah Moon the chief cook, had

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rushed in excitedly with news of the brigade's approach some time ago. For hours he had perched on the bank, with his eye glued to Tyee James' small telescope, which he had borrowed surreptitiously from the library. Of all the strange things, which Ah Sing had encountered in this wild northland, so far from his native rice fields, Tyee James' telescope fascinated him most.

At the top of the bank trail Old Antoine, leaning upon his crutches, waited to welcome the returned brigade. "Vay Twan" the English-speaking residents and the Indians called him, because the *voyageurs'* pronunciation of "Old Toine," in their own peculiar French, sounded like that to them. A ritual of the river sent the crews to offer their first greeting on shore to Vay Twan, because he had been the most skilful guide of the fur fleet. The old man, crippled by rheumatism now, limped painfully on crutches to the post every morning from his cabin a mile and a quarter away. On winter days he sat in the store by the stove among the blankets and other goods, and told tales of his youth as a trapper in the great woods, and as a canoeman on the rivers, lakes and portages of the long beaver trail. When spring came, he took to the bench outside the trading house and sat there all day long looking at the river which had been his life. Vay Twan would hear astonishing news this night. Running the fierce canyon rapids by moonlight! The grand exploit of that true man of the North, Le Ramier! Yes, there was news this night for Vay Twan!

A soft husky voice called a greeting in Spanish. The muleteer, nicknamed Spanish Don, was on the bank, too, with his pack boys. Off to the left, in the big log-fenced corral, his mules were munching their supper noisily. They

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were rather small animals, chiefly black with a sprinkling of red ones, none too agreeable in temper, but as sure-footed on the high steep trails, where they carried the fur bales, as the mountain sheep which looked down on them from the higher peaks.

"Journey's end! Now I know it," Murray said, a little later, surveying the other contented faces about the dining table. He gestured laughingly toward the roasts which Ah Moon and his assistant were bringing in. "There's peace and stability in the platter of a good roast of beef."

"Meat!" Ogden Graeme agreed. "A haunch of venison, bear steaks, a roast of beef when we can get it! The diet of fur traders and pioneers, and the foundation of a happy healthy life!"

"Hear, hear!" said James.

"By gar!" Graeme went on, his slanting black eyes snapping. "Those traders with McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver, they ate well! My grandfather, Peter Skene Ogden, he used to tell about it. How good those roast deers and beefs looked to him, eh, after weeks of pulling in his belt in the Salt Lake desert country? By gar, I'm proud of my grandfather. He had the eye of a hawk, the courage of a lion and the stomach of a fur trader!" His friends laughed.

"You have another reason to be proud," Tyee said. "Your grandfather was one of the great explorers in the long history of the Fur Trade: explorer and discoverer, too, of much of Nevada and Utah and discoverer of the Humboldt river."

"There have been many." Murray held his glass up, letting the candle-light play through the wine. They were abstemious men, these traders—a glass of madeira, the

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best, with their meat, and a small glass of port, likewise the best, at the end of the meal. "Ay, a grand roster of names, Ogden, Mackenzie, Fraser, Thompson, Hearne: and, long before their days, the bold Frenchmen, Radisson, La Vérendrye, Duluht, the Le Moynes."

"Ah, Monsieur!" the Marquis exclaimed. "Do not omit the father of them all. Champlain! Yet there is another name, *mes amis*, Henry of Navarre. The White Plume! It was he who sent Champlain and his friends—all old comrades in arms of Navarre's—to found New France. Is it strange, then, that your Fur Trade is one long unbroken story of valor, adventure and romance? No! The spirit of that perfect prince of chivalry accompanies it. Wherever the curled and fluttering streamers of the northern lights dart across the sky over fur brigades—as last night over ours, *chers amis*—and wherever the white clouds roll over St. Laurent's tide, over the great plains, over Oregon—*oui*, wherever the snow-covered ground stretches by leagues northward inviting the trapper to new trails—*there* is the White Plume! The White Plume of Navarre!"

"Phut!" Giraud snorted. "The trapper goes because it is profitable. That is the whole story."

"Ah! for once you are right, Old Comrade! Romance *is* profitable. It is the most profitable thing in life!" His Shadow glared at him over a forkful of kidneys.

"A tale of great men; and of men who were not great, but were courageous and strong," Murray said, returning to his theme. "But let us not forget the women in the story, though hardly a name is known to us. The woman of the red man's country is my toast. Beautiful, brave, loyal, she gave her love to the white trader and hunter and cemented her tribe to him in friendship. It was because of her that

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he could come and go with his furs and his goods, and build his cabin and trading house among a strange, suspicious and warlike people. Because of her, he could go west, north, marking the trail for the pioneer and his plow. The Fur Trade opened the frontiers and led settlement. But, I'm thinking, the greater glory for it all should go to *her*—the native woman of the wilderness."

"Murray, by gar, you say something!" Graeme pounded the wooden arm of his chair with his fist. "You all know about my grandmother; but now I have to tell you again. She was Salish. One time when Ogden's brigade was attacked, what does she do, this loyal woman, eh? She rides like mad straight into that fight and straight through those enemies, and she stampedes their pack horses!" He slapped his chair arm loudly, and laughed. "Well, they stop fighting and run to save their horses. Yes. My grandmother, by gar! She was a fine woman. She saved her man's life and all his furs."

"Ay," said Murray. "She was typical. I've been thinking much lately about the deep things in the fur trader's life among Indians, that the civilized world would never understand. We are a race apart, and have ever been. There's no other commerce that has shaped a new breed, as the Fur Trade has done. I don't mean solely the *voyageur* and the *coureur-de-bois*, which it created. Gold, fish, timber all influence, to a degree, the men who pursue them; but not like fur. And the odd thing is that, while civilization has followed us over the continent, plowed and settled the fur lands and driven us away with the beaver and the deer, yet 'tis our ideals, which we learned so largely from the wilderness and the Indians, that have gone deepest into the shaping of their social order. To be sure liberty, as an

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ideal, is older than North American civilization; and, as an instinct, it's as old as mankind. So I'm not forgetting that both the ideal and the instinctive desire for liberty brought many Europeans to these shores. I'm only saying that I think historians and philosophers have missed an important point in their studies of New World society, through ignoring the influence of Indian contact upon that older *instinct* of liberty in the white man."

"Yes," James responded. He was thinking of the years from boyhood into manhood which he had spent as the son of Tselistah.

"When I was at Edinburgh, the professors would be talking of prehistoric man, and discussing the pictures he drew of his life in some of the caves of Europe. It was very ancient, and very remote from them. But, on this continent, the white man met prehistoric man face to face—his own ancestor. Many didn't recognize him, and felt antagonistic. But there were others—and chief among them were the fur traders—whose instinct leaped to him and knew him for kin. Ay, leaped the gap of fifty thousand years, as a stag takes a brook in his stride. It was a colossal thing that happened to those who experienced it, and they were many. It's time for a new telling of the story of this continent, Tyee, in which this element—psychical even more than physical—shall at least be mentioned."

"Mr. Murray," Mrs. James said. "Neither historian nor philosopher can compass your theme. It needs a poet!"

"By gar, I would like that book!" Graeme cried. "I hope somebody writes it quick so I get a copy before next winter. You got a pretty bad winter last winter too, both Tyee and Finnan; but nothing like me. The way my trading post lies in the gut—by gar, when the Priest of the

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Long White Moons wants to snow me under, he can do it! Snow to the roof, pretty near; and then blow and snow some more. Before January I read over, I don't know how many times, all the London papers and magazines Mrs. James gave me last year. January, I started in on the labels of the canned goods on the shelves. Yes, by gar! And monotonous stories, like those labels on baking powder tins, they stick in a man's head; because they got a rhyme in them. They sing in my head like those music box songs you got, Mrs. James, from 'Pinafore.'

This cream of tartar baking powder
Is specially refined,
And scientific'ly combined,
By our own exclusive process-es.

By gar, I hope I get that book you talk about pretty soon, Murray!" His eyes snapped with pleasure at their laughter.

"Murray's right," Tyee said. He gestured toward the long shelves of books lining the solid wall, opposite the windows, from floor to ceiling. "I'm adding to the library all the books about fur I see listed in the publishers' catalogues, which Spanish Don's mules bring me every year. But they are few, and shallow. They miss your point altogether, Murray. The true story of the Fur Trade can't be told by men who think of furs solely in financial terms, and who believe that an Indian is another sort of wild animal. What a grossly mistaken view of a poetic and spiritual people! Allowing that religious and economical motives were strongly present in the colonization of North America—and that the Fur Trade can't claim to have been the sole influence—I say that these other groups with their religious aims and their economic necessities, have been

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plentifully written up. It's time for a re-telling of the story of this continent in terms of the Fur Trade. Fur traders, explorers, pioneers, and the makers of imperial wars."

"Ay." Murray nodded. "The cabins and the kings must be in the story. But let it be told with a strong bias for Chief Beaver and his clan."

"Not forgetting the women," Mrs. James said. She laughed as she composed a parody of a verse in her small daughter's book.

The time has come, the Walrus said,
To talk of many things—
Explorers, Indians, beaver-pelts,
Of cabins and of kings.

She rose, saying,

"We must go out and join them on the bank, or we will never get to bed tonight. The children ought to be asleep now."

They opened the front door on a blast of music and the muted padding of moccasined feet. At least a score of fiddles were shrieking to the night. Dancing figures whirled in grotesque silhouette against the camp fires and passed on into the shadows among the tents. Le Ramier saw the traders coming and shouted the news. In welcome to Tyee James, the fiddles tuned off from *En roulant ma boule* and dashed, scraping and screaming, into *Blow ye winds*. Tyee caught the phrase on his flute and his stride shortened and quickened into dancing steps. The little girl danced, holding to his pocket. Flower Murray danced, with a dancing child at each hand. Every one danced, and sang.

When the dance ended, there was a round of beef broth

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and flat bread baked on the hot stones. They squatted by the fires and watched the vivid pantomime of an Indian hunter, named Four Clouds, as he told of a bear hunt. There were gasps and grunts from the thrilled audience when the bear pitched down dead at his feet! Four Clouds stood back from the corpse, folded his arms, lifted his head, and chanted:

Ho! Black Bear, Black Bear, ho!
I sing thanksgiving to your spirit.
There shall be meat in my lodge.

Then Lé Ramier must tell of his mighty deed—with burlesquings and boasts which brought forth shouts of laughter.

"I am one strong man. I lif' t'at pirogue on my ches'—
hein? an' I t'row 'im back in t'e river—*comme ça!* Huh!"

A trifle, this, he assured them, for Le Ramier, man of the North. Had not Le Ramiers been famous men on all the rivers of the fur trail for, he could not say, how many hundred years?—"Mebbe one t'ousan'." From "Kébec" northwest through *Lac Supérieur*, and south on *Mississeeep rivière*, *Mizzourie*, *Arkans*, and west to *rivière Colombe!* Some place down there had the name of one of them—Fort Le Ramier (Laramie). He was a young man yet, but already he had five sons. There would be more. A strong breed, Le Ramiers. No end to them. He lifted his clear tenor in his favorite song; which was no brisk chant of war or hunting prowess, but a tender melody with lines about plucking a white rose—"la belle rose, qui pendait au rosier blanc."

The fires were dying down, and there was no more broth. Yawns and sleepy grunts began to be heard. The traders

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rose to go. As they moved off, Tyee's flute led in one last song, the best beloved in the repertory of the rivers of the long beaver trail. The fiddles answered, and the voices.

Luy a longtèmps que je t'aime
Jamais je ne t'oublierai.

Tyee James halted at the store to get a lantern for the two Frenchmen, who had to walk half a mile through the woods to their cabin. In the moment of silence there came a hoarse explosive sound from Shadow Giraud.

"Phut! Should I go back now to measure cloth in Lyons? What horror!" He trudged off, lighting the path for his friend.

The others went on to the house through the garden, which was black from the thick interlacing branches overhead. The aurora played faintly and fitfully across the sky.

"The souls of dead braves also dance tonight," Murray said, quoting the Crees' explanation of the northern lights. Tyee spoke of another tribal theory.

"The Red Deer, Maker and Keeper of Fire, is striking the forest with his antlers." Presently he added, "Indian thoughts—but inspired by the same wilderness which took white men and made them over into what you have called 'a breed apart'."

"Ay." Murray replied. "And whoever has once drawn the north wilderness of the Fur Trade into his soul—or hers—is sundered forever from other breeds, as by flaming antlers." He went on presently. "Civilization is so close in our time that it's a serious problem to be a breed apart. Men can still live our life, going on northward as the farmers come to crowd us out. But there's no future for my

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little girls at my trading post. Only a few *voyageurs* and Indians about. My sons will do well enough, entering the trade. But my girls can't do that. They're young enough to forget this life in the demands of the new life in Scotland. I'm taking them away now, before the Red Deer has thrust his antlers forever betwixt them and all different folk and ways."

"It's true, Murray, that you and I are seeing the last of the old free life of a fur trader in this section of the North. The end will come for me a score of years, at least, before it comes for you: because settlers are already homesteading about Fort Fraser, and the government is building wagon roads and talking about iron rails—and no beaver frequents such highways. When the end does come, I'll probably take my family down to one of the cities. But I myself can never forget—and I don't want my daughter to forget—all that you symbolized just now in the fiery horns of the Red Deer. Wherever she may be, I want her always to be able to see his shining antlers."

Tyee's small daughter understood nothing of their conversation, except the last words which told her that Tyee did not want her to part from the Red Deer. She was glad of that, because she loved the Red Deer and his bright horns tossing along the dark space above until they filled all her sky.

Just now, however, other thoughts were pressing upon her. There were important and thrilling things for a small hostess to plan for the pleasure of her guests, who would be with her for several days. They could play games, such as ball, and there were tricks with the lasso and races and shooting; they had bows and arrows too, like hers, she had noticed. Caribou Stag, Tselistah's youngest grandson,

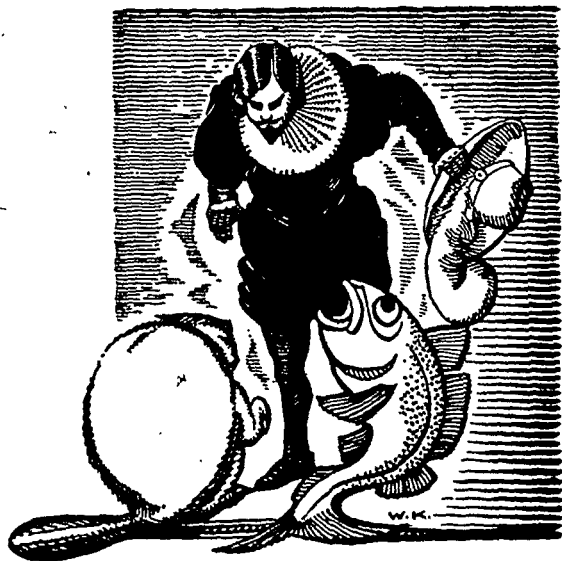
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must come over tomorrow. Caribou Stag could run like the wind! Ah Sing was fun to play with, too; and Le Ramier's daughter Marie, and Vay Twan's granddaughter Toi-nette, and Four Clouds' daughter Hazel-Nut. All these girls liked to sew and to string beads. Flower's children had sewed in the boat. The girls who enjoyed sewing, which she detested, could play at that, which would give her a chance to finish Alice. Almost a quarter of the book remained unread, because words of several syllables sometimes delayed her on a page for a long time.

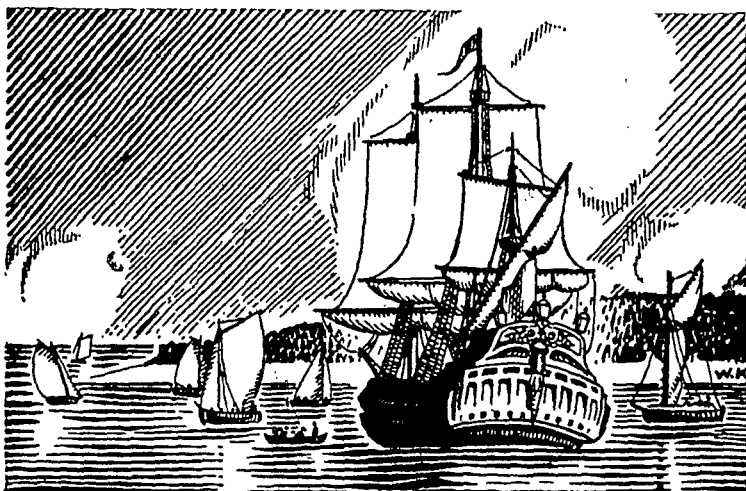
You might as well try to catch a Bandersnatch! But I'll make a memorandum about her—

It was necessary for her, when confronted with such a passage as this, to sit very still and to be very silent for a long time, silent inside as well as with her lips, and to let her mind go free to search in the invisible place where all meanings existed and where they could surely be found at last by this Indian magic of silent searching. After a prolonged hunt, today, her mind had returned with perfectly satisfying meanings for "Bandersnatch" and "memorandum."

She snuggled into her feather mattress under the lynx robe, which was her counterpane, with Alice under her pillow. Her sleepy thoughts tried vainly to repeat her mother's rhyme—something the Walrus said about beaver, kings and cabins.







CHAPTER II

COD INTRODUCES BEAVER

THE great Empire-BUILDER of this continent has never received the credit due him. Like many, probably most, of those famous ones, who have flung far the outlines of dominion, he is truly social, a home and community builder, a monogamous husband; and he has planted these ideals of his in all the likely creeks of North America. His name is Beaver.

He founded Canada. He was a powerful influence in colonizing the Atlantic seaboard of These States, and he was a leader in the successive great movements for their westward expansion. He sustained the early explorers. He captained a century of intermittent warfare between French and English on this continent. The Indians gave Beaver

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first place among fur-bearing animals because his fur combines snug warmth with a velvet softness and is backed by a very strong skin; it cannot be torn and only a very sharp blade can cut it. It is the warmest and most durable of land furs. Throughout a large part of the Indian country, before the coming of the white man, the beaver pelt was the standard of value in barter among tribes. It became, and was for long, the standard currency of the Fur Trade. And it was the stuff of which kings' hats were made in the days when monarchs were glorious. Though the wanton whims of style and fashion cause several other skins to fetch higher prices now in the markets than his, Beaver remains still, and justly, the symbol of the North American Fur Trade.

The early history of this continent, north of the Rio Grande, cannot be fully understood without the story of fur, so closely are the two interwoven. How, and when, did the Fur Trade begin? It would be only fitting to record some dramatic scene as the inception of the new commerce, which was to influence social development in the New World so profoundly. We remember the expeditions which sailed westward to seek, first, Cathay and, then, the Strait of Anian, the short direct route to it, which—so hopeful geographers declared—must open somewhere in the coastline of America's intruding bulk; and we see glamour hanging like sunlight on their sails and dripping like gold from their rising anchors. We think of the stiff and sombre pomp of the Spanish court, where Ferdinand and Isabella receive Columbus, and Ferdinand signs, none too graciously, the contract which creates the red-haired Genoese adventurer "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" in return for a mere dream, as yet, of jewels and spices: while, south-

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ward, in the harbor of Palos, the *Santa Maria* rides with her smaller sisters, *Pinta* and *Niña*, and the cries of the *Pinta's* master, Martin Pinzón, seeking seamen, are heard along the wharves: "Friends, come with us! You will find the houses with roofs of gold!" Or, it is the mansion of the Dutch East India Company in Amsterdam that opens before us, with the gleam of water at all windows. Here merchants, who wield sovereign power on distant seas through the guns of half a hundred armed trading vessels, hold their final conference with another ruddy foreign sailor. In their employ Henry Hudson sets out, this April day, on his third voyage to find the short way to Asia. He will make a fourth, next year, for England—from which he will not return, and his discovery of Hudson Bay will not interest his nation for sixty years.

Out of glory and power Columbus went forth to seek Cathay, and Hudson to look for the Northwest Passage to the fragrant Isles of Spice. In like fashion, Jacques Cartier had been sent out in 1534 by handsome, witty Francis I, King of France. Francis was eager to annoy Spain, as well as to enrich France. He had experienced Spanish captivity, after a desperate defeat—which inspired him to give to posterity the phrase "All is lost save honor"—and his soul within him was hot with resentment.

"God has not created those lands solely for Castilians!" he declared, in sponsoring Cartier's voyage. And he responded to the protests of Charles V of Spain with a neat letter:

"Show me, I pray you, the will of our Father, Adam, so that I may see if he has really made you and the King of Portugal his universal heirs."

But Cartier's discovery of the St. Lawrence, and his

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ascent of the river to the present Montreal, led to nothing, at that time, though they were to become significant sixty years later. His attempt to colonize with a few criminals failed miserably. He had found neither another Peru, nor the Strait of Anian, and Francis lost interest.

The western voyage which was to effect the greatest change in the world, indirectly, began and ended with the least glamour and with no recorded *bon mot*. This was the voyage of John Cabot. The Merchant-Venturers of Bristol, who equipped and dispatched Cabot, were men of power in the kingdom and on the sea, like Hudson's Dutch sponsors of a century later, but more reticent. They did not give him a ship painted in all the hues of a tulip garden, like the *Half Moon*. And his sovereign, Henry VII, tossed no word of wit to add sparkle to his sailing morn—since it is the very nature of wit to leap forth freely, asking not the cost, and Henry was a parsimonious man. Henry, however, bestowed the glitter of royal favor on Cabot, if little gold, and full authority to sail to all parts “of the East, of the West and of the North. . . . to set up Our banners and ensignes in every village, town, castel, yle and maine lande of them newly founde.”

In Columbus' and Cabot's day and for centuries after the short route to the golden East was the romantic dream of monarchs, merchants and mariners. The decree of Pope Alexander VI had made Spain master of the western hemisphere (barring the unsuspected elbow of Brazil, which thrust over the Pope's line into the eastern domain given by him to Portugal). The gold of Mexico and Peru had enriched her, as the spices of the East had enriched Portugal. Other nations could not look for riches in the Spanish discoveries of Cuba, Peru, and Mexico, without a war with

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Spain. But Cathay, the treasure box of the Khans, was not the possession of any European monarch and should open easily to whatever hardy traders could reach it. The ships of these hardy traders—the Dutch, for instance—trying for a share of the eastern wealth, were often beset and captured, or sunk, by the Portuguese, who were masters of the route via Africa to India. The sea roads frequented by the powerful were perilous paths for other sails. Magellan's discovery of a southern passage, by way of America, did not improve matters a great deal. For one thing, the route from Europe to the Orient by the Strait of Magellan was too long; and the passage, itself, was of such vicious water and wind that it was as well fitted to be a grave of ships as a path for them. The wish father to the thought, the dreamers declared that there must be another, a shorter, calmer channel to the north of the lands actually settled by the Spanish. And, almost surely, imperial cities, like Cuzco and Tenochtitlan, rose on its banks. These cities would add bright plunder, but the real objective was the wealth of the East. The nation which discovered this passage, and fortified it at both ends, would be master of the world.

So history unrolls its most glamorous pageantry in connection with the search for the Northwest Passage, but shows us no imposing scene in monarch's court, or merchant's hall, for the beginning of the Fur Trade; which was to exercise a greater power, as a shaper of destiny, than all the gold of Ormus and of Ind.

The Fur Trade began accidentally. It was a chance outgrowth of the cod fish trade, which also happened without previous intent. The trade in American cod resulted from John Cabot's accidental discovery of the Newfoundland Banks when, in seeking the short route to China, he

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planted St. George's Cross on Cape Breton Island and followed a part of the coast of Canada; being the first European to discover the mainland of the New World since the days of the Norsemen.

Cabot, in the service of the Bristol merchants, had fished for cod off Iceland. The vast Banks of the New World impressed him and his crew. Very naturally, he said a great deal about the new cod grounds to his friends after his return. His discoveries and his account of them—already touched up with the colors of street rumor—are the substance of a long letter from the Milanese ambassador to his Duke, dated December 1497. Believing that the tale of "Messer Zoanne Caboto's" adventures will divert His Highness, the ambassador writes:

They affirm that the sea is full of fish, which are not only taken with a net, but also with a basket, a stone being fastened to it in order to keep it in the water. . . . They took up so many fish that this kingdom will no longer have need of Iceland. . . . But Messer Zoanne has set his mind on higher things, for he thinks that, when that place has been occupied, he will keep on still farther to the east, where he will be opposite to an island called Cipangu, situated in the equinoctial region, where he believes that all the spices of the world, as well as the jewels, are found.

The amiable, gossipy ambassador remarks that Messer Zoanne "being a foreigner and poor" would surely have been dubbed a liar if his report had not been substantiated by his crew "who are nearly all English" and, like himself, from "Bristo." Messer Zoanne, he says further, has even constructed a wooden globe "on which he shows where he has been. . . . His Majesty has acquired a part of Asia without drawing his sword." There is much more about Asia than about cod in this letter to Milan.

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But, if the spices of Cathay perfumed the dreams of graceful penmen and other romantics, there were hard-headed business men who asked nothing sweeter than the odor of fish. As speedily as slow sailing ships, before the discovery of tacking, could carry the tale that John Cabot had claimed a shore of Asia for his king, just so fast spread the news, on foreign wharves, of a western fishing ground teeming with cod. This was important news to catholic Europe with its many meatless days. The fishing ships of France and Portugal, as well as of Britain, were soon following the route which Cabot had opened. How Henry VII appraised the value of Cabot's discoveries is suggested by an item of His Majesty's careful bookkeeping: "To Hym that founde the new Ile—£10."

It was a bold and tedious voyage to America for the small craft of those days, propelled by oars and a "favorable wind"—the wind which blew from behind. Perhaps the Bristol men, so long associated with Iceland, preferred the northern waters, with old friends and shorter trips, for, from the beginning, the French fishermen outnumbered the English and all other adventurers on the Banks. In 1527 John Rut of Bristol, seeking the Strait of Anian, put in at St. John's harbor, Newfoundland, and saw "eleven sail of Normans and one Britaine (Breton) and two Portugal barques, and all a-fishing."

The story of mariners' efforts to sail against the wind is a lost chapter and we do not know who first did it. In 1539 the English ship-builder, Fletcher of Rye, demonstrated the principle of tacking, or sailing against the wind with sails trimmed fore and aft. His successful experiment introduced a momentous change in shipping. For one thing, it shortened the voyage to the Newfoundland Banks from

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months to a few weeks. Twenty years later, those unquiet waters along a wilderness coast were tossing many ships. Spanish vessels were coming now, and Basque whalers from the Bay of Biscay.

We even hear of pirate raids among the fleets; English and French ships plundering one another on the way home for their cargoes of "fyshe of the New-founde Island." And we hear, too, of friendly trade at sea. For instance, the old sea-dog, Master John Hawkins, after ministering to the needs of the starving French at Fort Caroline in 1565, sailed north and bought cod for his voyage home from the Normans on the Banks. In 1578 one hundred and fifty French vessels were reported, to but fifty English. The English, turned protestant, were substituting the rare roast beef of old England for their former fish diet. The Reformation, indeed, shook the fish market to its foundations; and, also, made it practically certain that Canada—Cabot's landfall—would be colonized not by the English but by the French. In 1603 there were six hundred French ships on the Banks.

The great majority of the French fishers were Normans. The Normans were descendants of the Vikings, of whom it has been said that they were the first mariners to anchor their ships with prows to the sea.

No heart for the harp has he, nor for acceptance of treasure,
No pleasure has he in a wife, no delight in the world,
Nor in aught save the roll of the billows; but always a longing,
A yearning uneasiness hastens him on to the sea.

Their racial characteristics, as well as their numbers, made the Normans leaders on the Banks and in the work of drying cod on the shore; and, for many years thereafter, perhaps a century, the Indians of Canada called all

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Frenchmen "Normans." These Norman fishers left a legacy to the fish trade in the name "trawler," which is derived from their old verb *trawler*, meaning to go hither and thither—as their boats were drifted about on the Banks by the wind.

Sailing in April from Rouen, St. Malo and Dieppe, and returning in August, the fleets spent three months in the New World. The dry cod fishers built platforms ashore where they split and salted the cod and spread them to dry on the rocks. Each ship had its station, and its own platforms, and returned to them annually. Because labor and time were required to erect the platforms, it was important that the Indians should not destroy them, but let them stand from year to year. Therefore the fishers must make friends with the Indians. How? By gifts and trade. The world over, and time through, these have opened the way to amicable relations between strangers.

In the red man's kit the knife was supreme. Deprive the silent footed hunter of all but knife and fire and he could still live: and, with knife and fire, he could shape again, from wood and bone, all the other types of weapons and implements which were in use among the Indians of Newfoundland and Quebec when the French arrived. The Indians, watching the fishermen split the cod, were impressed at once by the superiority of the white man's knife; a keen blade, flexible yet strong, which could be sharpened easily on another, or on a stone. This tool, they saw, would ease the labor of its possessor and give him power and distinction among his tribesmen. An early trader writes "the savages offered their best furs for our knives." Since beaver was the red man's most valuable fur, it is likely that the

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Fur Trade began with the exchange of a beaver pelt for a cod fisher's knife.

As the French ships increased yearly on the Banks the fishermen took out goods for trade with the Indians. They regarded this trade merely as a necessary detail of the fishing venture, and were well pleased to sell their furs at home for whatever the chance buyer might offer. Even the merchants in the markets of Dieppe, Rouen and St. Malo felt little or no interest in furs from the New World for a quarter of a century; though then, as now, furs were popular with all classes who could afford them. The well-to-do walked abroad in winter garments fur-lined, and in summer garments fur-trimmed. Kings' robes were adorned with ermine. Sable and other choice peltry enhanced the cloaking pomp of nobles and ecclesiastical dignitaries. The gentleman's hands, as well as his lady's, were sheathed against the chill blast in a small muff. The prosperous captain of industry, as he stood on the windy quai and looked at his Newfoundland ships weighing anchor, held hard to the wide brim of a beaver-felt hat from Flanders; and there was fur on his bellying sleeve. Indeed the story of fur in Europe is a very long one. The European trade in peltry dates at least as far back as the heyday of Tyre and Sidon, when ships of Tarshish sailed to what was then the Wild West; and civilized Phoenician traders bartered beads and mirrors and cloth for furs with the savage natives of Spain and Britain.

With fur in such great demand, the fish merchants of the French ports may seem to have been slow in grasping the possibilities of the trade. Doubtless the religious wars, which were rending France, were largely responsible for the delay. But the day did come at last when the commer-

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cial eye saw beyond cod. Merchants began to ponder the probable profits of the Fur Trade; seeing the many prime pelts which now entered France annually, not only through the Norman harbors of Dieppe and Rouen. The Basques were fetching home furs now, with whale oil, to their own port of St. Jean de Luz; and the Bretons to little St. Malo on its granite island, from which Jacques Cartier had sailed, years before, apparently for naught. Furs became one of the chief topics of the ports. When the fishers came ashore the eager exchange of news and questions was no longer only of cod, nor of the war; no longer what of Navarre? what of the Spanish League? But what of furs? Would Cartier's river, St. Lawrence, be worth something after all? *Tiens!* one had thought of it no more after Cartier's disastrous attempt to colonize there with jailbirds! What if St. Lawrence were the great River of the West flowing from China? Yes! The very mouth of the Strait of Anian, no doubt! France should colonize there now with good people, at the gateway to Cathay! The merchants themselves cared little about China and colonies once they had really caught the vision of the Fur Trade; but they knew that charters and monopolies would be granted more readily to potential discoverers of the short waterway to China, and to loyal planters of an imperial colony at its mouth, than to cod traders reaching out for beaver. These were the ideas to set before the King. With the clauses of their petition already taking shape in their minds, they interrogated the dry cod fishers about the natives, about their land, its timber, agriculture and climate.

Who can speak with authority of these things? Here is one; a hardy and grizzled veteran of the Banks. His devout female relatives are praising the saints this day for

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his thirty-fourth safe return. He can tell the merchants much about the natives and about the first stretches of the St. Lawrence, the river which may lead to Cathay and surely does lead into a rich fur country. He has many old friends—and a family—at least, one—among the Indians. In the company of his red kinsmen he has been up the St. Lawrence to the splendid hill which Cartier named Mont Real. And on farther still, by paddle and portages, beyond the rapids, not yet named Lachine. He is already a familiar of the birch bark canoe. We have this brief record of him, an actual though anonymous adventurer of those days, whose name would not matter to us if we knew it. He is less an individual than a type. He is the first *voyageur*.

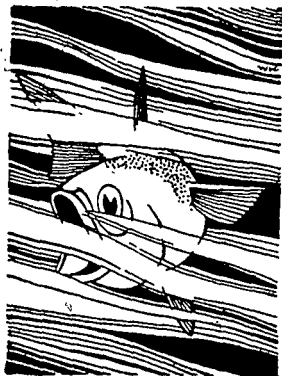
There are other men in the crews, who can tell more. These are younger men probably, restless fellows, who have sometimes taken French leave of their ships on the return sailing date and gone into the forest with the Indians for the autumn hunt and the winter trapping. They, too, have close ties in the Indian villages, where they have tasted a freer life than even the sea affords. A few of them may be young enough yet to live to see the rise of the *coureurs-de-bois*, with their own halfcaste sons in the ranks—the lawless brotherhood of the wilderness, scorning all the attempted restraints of Church and State.

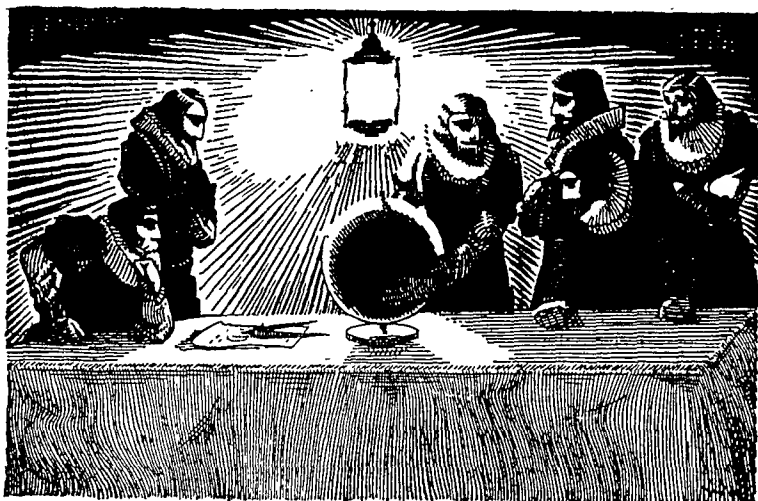
Wherever these merchants are gathered on the wharf of any port, talking eagerly with their returned fishermen about the fur land, which they are now willing to colonize for the sake of pelts, their blended shadow, cast on the dock by the sun and enlarged by the sea wind spreading their garments, is the proverbial forecast of a coming event. It is the shadow of Empire.

There is evidence that penetration of the Indian realm

COD INTRODUCES BEAVER

by Frenchmen had been going on for years, possibly for a quarter of a century, before the first trading post was erected in Canada. Since history is silent, imagination flies free to picture, as it chooses, the unrecorded adventures of the wild men of the sea when they first won the friendship of the wild men of the forest, went inland with them and learned to hunt and trap and to use the Indian bow and arrows and spear, mated with Indian women, and poured the blood of Breton, Norman and Basque through Algonkin veins. Those years of comradeship and racial blending prepared the way for the peaceful founding of New France and began to shape a new breed of men who would carry her trade to the Rockies and the Mexican Gulf; and who would go on, after her fall, spreading the Fur Trade to the Pacific and the Arctic oceans. Looking back again at those groups of cod merchants and fishermen on the French wharves, as the seventeenth century dawned, we understand why they could learn enough from their crews about the natural advantages which the St. Lawrence valley offered to colonists to give force to their pleas before the King.





CHAPTER III

BEAVER FOUNDS CANADA

THE story of the first colonizing fur companies of New France is brief and unedifying. Monopolies were granted successively to several companies, who engaged to plant and maintain colonies and to transport settlers every year. It was also understood that they were to further exploration toward discovery of the short route to the East; which appears in the records of that century under various names—the Strait of Anian, the River of the West, the Northwest Passage. In each case the monopoly was soon revoked because these provisions had been practically ignored.

The favored company was always an object of envy to the other merchants of the ports, who wanted to share in

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the new commerce, and these disgruntled ones were not slow in letting the monopolists' shortcomings be known in high places. The monopolists themselves held firmly to the notion that the best way to build the western wall of France's empire was to take criminals from the gaols and vagrants from the alleys, deposit them somewhere, anywhere, on Canadian soil and leave them to fend for themselves. Of forty men and women of this type, who were landed on Sable Island in 1598, only eleven were still there five years later. The others had either perished, or been taken off, and home, by the cod fishers. Lonely, stormswept Sable Island, well out in the ocean off the coast of Nova Scotia, was the worst possible site for the first French colony; which was planted, supposedly, to hold the country about Cartier's river secure for France! It may have been chosen because Portuguese fishermen had once landed cattle and pigs there, intending to found a fishing settlement, but, more probably, because it was near the Banks. The nearest land would naturally seem an ideal site to the company which had been forced to bear the cost of feeding the "settlers" on the voyage and did not intend to spend another *sou* on them once they were ashore. The ships of the envious carried the tale home with the season's cod, and two years later the monopoly was in the hands of another "colonizer," Pierre Chauvin of Honfleur. His name is recorded because he built the first trading post on North American soil.

Chauvin arrived on the St. Lawrence in 1600 with sixteen petty criminals and street beggars to show for the fifty settlers he had agreed to transport. He landed at Tadoussac and proceeded to erect his trading post, with the help of his crew. His colonists did not remain long

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enough to take part in the historic occasion. These sixteen vagrants on the mainland were in a luckier state than the forty who had been marooned on Sable Island, for, at least, they could see one possible chance of survival. They took it. They made off at once to the Indians! The hospitable red man turned no one away from his open hearth and the deer-roasting above it; and these Indians on the lower St. Lawrence were friends and relations of Frenchmen.

Chauvin did not trade long at Tadoussac. He, too, lost his monopoly because of his failure to colonize. He had transported no settlers but the sixteen, who so readily exchanged the *fleur-de-lys* for feathers, and he had made no effort to discover whether the majestic stream, which brought down his furs, flowed from China.

Hitherto the King, Henry of Navarre, and his chief advisors had not been keenly interested in colonization. The whole glorious dream of a New France overseas was merely the glamour which cod merchants cast over their greed for beaver. It was the slogan and the patriotic patter whereby they won monopolies. Their rivals appropriated it, turned it against them, and used it so effectively that they lost their monopolies. In time, inevitably, the impassioned oratory of self-seeking commercial rivals awoke echoes in the hearts of true patriots. One of these was Henry himself. Colonization began to be discussed very seriously at the court. The discussions received an impetus toward action in 1602 when the English seaman, Gosnold, visited the coast south of the St. Lawrence, traded with the natives and sailed home with a cargo of sassafras, furs and other oddities of the New World. Raleigh's attempt to colonize at Roanoke came to mind again and looked, now, less like an English failure than like an English beginning in

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America. English trading vessels, such as Gosnold's, along the American coast would, almost surely, be followed by English colonists, who might settle where Cabot had landed—or even on Cartier's river! News came, too, of Dutch vessels prowling those northern waters. One of the Dutch ships, at least, perhaps several, had been piloted into the Gulf of St. Lawrence by Basque whalers. In short, France could not hope to retain the territory explored by Cartier unless Frenchmen occupied it.

King Henry saw the need of colonization as clearly as he saw that his problems at home and his depleted treasury would not permit him to undertake it. The civil and religious wars, which had ended with his accession to the throne, had stricken the nation in body and purse. To heal and unite France was the supreme task before Henry IV. It seemed obvious enough that the cod fish merchants of the ports were the men who should found New France. They possessed the ships for transporting settlers and supplies; they reaped the major profits of both fish and furs; they would be hardest hit if England, or Holland, should seize the gateway to the Beaver Lands. Thus far, the favored traders had shown themselves greedy and blind; and the other companies, barred from the Fur Trade by the monopoly, had stirred up a great deal of trouble. Sectional jealousies, so perilous at this time, had been aroused. Bretons waxed wroth over Norman privileges. Rouen was indignant when her Norman sister, Dieppe, was preferred above her, and much more so when the monopoly went to merchants of Honfleur, or St. Malo. The Basques, who were independent, held a low opinion of the rights of both Norman and Breton monopolists; and one northern French port was of as little consequence as another to the

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truculent and scornful men from St. Jean de Luz, who were always ready to back up their views with their blows.

Henry turned to a group of his personal friends. These were two huguenot noblemen, Pierre de Guast, Sieur de Monts, Governor of Pons, and François Gravé, Sieur du Pont, whose name is usually written Pontgravé; and three catholics, Aymar de Clermont, Sieur de Chastes, who was Governor of Dieppe, Jean de Biencourt, the Baron de Poutrincourt of Picardy, and Samuel de Champlain, son of a middle class family of Brouages. Henry's friendship with these men dated from the stormy years when, as the huguenot soldier and prince, Henry of Navarre, he had led the protestant and catholic patriots against the pro-Spanish league fostered by the Guises. With the interesting exception of Poutrincourt they had been his staunch supporters. The politics of that period are no part of the story of fur. It is sufficient to recall that the powerful family of Guise hoped to dominate France by the aid of Philip II of Spain who, in his turn, wished to use France as a base for attacking England. Navarre and his followers of both creeds fought against the intriguers who would have made France a cat's-paw for Spain, and defeated them. The Baron de Poutrincourt had been Henry's foe in the war; he had fought for the Spanish league.

The story of the Fur Trade stretches over three centuries into our own day. Among its vivid illustrations are pictures of groups of men who—in their several periods and stations—advanced civilization westward and northward, cast nations into war for Beaver and, by their activities as traders and hunters, largely determined the type of government and the social system which were to rule on this continent. If we imagine that story as adapted for the

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screen, we grasp the significance of its dramatic progress most clearly in the flashes or close-ups of certain groups. Charles of England appears first with two storm-beaten *coureurs-de-bois* of the Great North, Radißon and Groseilliers, whose thrilling tales result in the organization of the Hudson's Bay Company, the mighty rival of the fur traders of New France. Eighty years pass swiftly on the screen; Charles' palace walls melt into those of a mansion in Virginia, where the British governor bids the youthful George Washington remove the French from their fortified fur post on the site of Pittsburg and, thereby, precipitates the Seven Years War, which ends with the British conquest of Canada. The screen pageant moves on with flashes of Jefferson and Lewis and Clark, who open the American fur trader's way to the Pacific; of Astor and the company of men in his employ, who build a trading post on the Columbia and, so, determine the flag over Oregon: of named and nameless lords in tartan of the breed of the old chieftains of Scotland, reigning and warring, trading and exploring, in the North and bringing its secrets, bit by bit, to the mapmakers; of Boone and Carson and other trappers and hunters leading pioneers westward.

The men who sat in Henry's chamber, digesting the unwelcome news of Gosnold's voyage, were the parent group. They were the founders of the Fur Trade, which was to sustain the North American frontier settlements in their growth toward the civilization which we enjoy. As such they claim a few moments of our attention.

To the white-haired De Chastes Henry owed most, because De Chastes had saved the patriots' cause, when it seemed lost, by bringing Dieppe under his banner. De Monts, who was to become the mainstay of the projected

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colony, and to ruin himself at the task, was a good soldier, a wise governor and a sound merchant with a fortune won on the Banks. There are no portraits of him, he must be pictured from his deeds: they suggest a grave face, the steadfast look of a man of enterprise who has come through a holocaust bringing his wealth with him, and who has shed the dross of money-love in the flames.

Without Pontgravé, the sacrifices and efforts of the others would have been made in vain; yet Pontgravé is only a name; a name sounding like a salt wind. Of noble birth, he had no fortune, apparently, since he seems to have been the captain of a fishing ship, one of De Monts', perhaps. The arrivals and departures of "Sieur Dupont-Gravé of St. Malo (very skilled in sea voyages from having made many)" are faithfully noted in Champlain's records. Let wind and tide and foemen's guns do what they might, Pontgravé never failed. For twenty-nine years he was almost continuously on the sea, carrying colonists and supplies to New France and fetching home furs. Champlain, whose name we know best, was probably the youngest of the group. He was thirty-five. De Chastes, who had known him for a brave young soldier during the war, and had attached him to himself afterwards, may have introduced Champlain to the King. All his youth Champlain had been a soldier on the land, but he was the son of a mariner and he had always longed to go to sea. Immediately after the war he achieved his desire. He was given command of a vessel which carried the Spanish soldiers of the league home to Spain. In Spain he ingratiated himself with the admiralty and presently set out, master of a Spanish ship, in the escort of one Don Francisco Colombo, who was sailing with twenty galleons to protect Puerto Rico from

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the English. For posterity, the one important result of Don Francisco's imposing naval gesture was a short manuscript, the *Bref Discours*, with drawings, in which Champlain described and sketched what he had seen of the Antilles, Mexico and Panama. It is worth noting that Champlain was the first man to advocate the Panama Canal. Let a ditch deep and wide enough for a ship's passage be dug across this narrow isthmus, he said, and the golden dream of a short route to Cathay would come true!—"the voyage to the South Sea would be shortened by more than 1500 leagues." He returned to France in 1601, and was soon at court telling his adventures to Henry, who gave him a pension and the title of "Geographer." The true lineaments of Champlain are also lost to us, more sadly lost than if we possessed no portrait called by his name. The well-known engraving of Champlain suggests a city wine merchant, or other well-to-do business man, of that period; it is the face of a man without a spark of adventure in his sound, stable, commercial soul. And, doubtless, it is an excellent likeness of the Controller-General of Finances, who sat for it in 1654. But why was the portrait of a Controller-General of Finances selected, one hundred and fifty years later, as the proper model for a likeness of Champlain—who, all his life, loved adventure and peril by the sword, on the sea and in the wilderness, and hardly cared enough for money to count his salary when, at last, a small stipend was paid him for his duties as Lieutenant to the Viceroy of New France? That mystery would seem to be insoluble!

Even genuine portraits, however true to the features, may fail to show the man. For instance, it was beyond the power of pigment to catch and reflect the flame of romance

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and chivalry which made Henry of Navarre the crown prince of glamour in his lifetime and for three centuries after. His spirited battle cry, "Follow the White Plume!" still echoes on the bright paths of hazard, where venturesome men pursue dreams to be won, or died for, at the end. The Henry, who sat with his friends talking of the New France to be, knew that his years of daring chance on the field were done, that the politician and royal autocrat had succeeded to the soldier and the happy comrade of rude men brave to bear steel. Henry must have felt, sometimes, a twinge of envy nipping him when he saw Poutrincourt's eyes flash suddenly with eager prophecy of bold deeds still to be done. Poutrincourt was the one man in the group who was of Henry's own type. The name of Biencourt de Poutrincourt had been illustrious in Picardy for five hundred years. During the war Henry had laid siege to Poutrincourt's castle of Beaumont; but to no purpose, so gallantly had the Baron and his small force defended it. Navarre, like another Henry, "dearly loved a man"; and he divined a man, behind those stubborn walls, very much after his own heart. As his correspondence reveals, Henry's talent for letter-writing to his friends of both sexes was not the least of his charming accomplishments. He sent Poutrincourt a letter pointing out the manifest absurdity of enmity between two such kindred spirits and, in effect, saying "surrender, be friends, and I'll give you back your castle." What Poutrincourt felt is seen plainly enough in what he did later; but, as a loyal member of the league, he refused. When Henry accepted the catholic faith and Paris with it, Poutrincourt made all haste to the court to offer his allegiance. It is natural to find him allied with

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Henry's other friends, who would follow the White Plume overseas.

A lion for courage, but of variable affections, opportunist rather than idealist, and always past master of the romantic gesture, Navarre loved men who were truer than he. He had the penetration to know when he had found them and the magnetic charm to win and hold them. So, in the discussions of Henry and his trusty friends, the project of New France took shape. Viewed against the background of their time, and of the years of war which had only so recently closed for them—a dark tapestry of bloodshed and fanaticism—the founders of Canada offer a miracle of moral self-conquest for our contemplation. They had been politically divided, they were religiously divided; but, for the sake of a new and more splendid vision of service to their country, patriot and leaguer, catholic and huguenot, sheathed past furies with their swords. The shadow of bigotry never again fell between them.

De Chastes, the president of the company, sent out Champlain and Pontgravé, in 1603, to determine the best sites for a colony; and for the trading posts, which must support it, since Henry had no money to spend on it.

The first voyage of the new company, in 1603, was profitable in both knowledge and trade. Champlain occupied himself chiefly in exploration. Leaving Pontgravé employed in a brisk barter for pelts, Champlain went up the St. Lawrence to Lachine, the head of ship navigation, explored the Richelieu to the rapid of St. Ours and about forty miles of the Saguenay. The Indians welcomed him warmly. They were already the friends of "Normans"; and, doubtless, of some of the men who were with Champlain on this journey. In engaging their ship's crew in the

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home port, Champlain and Pontgravé would naturally look about for sailors who were familiar with the hinterland and its people and who could act as guides and, in a measure, as interpreters.

Pontgravé and Champlain sailed home with enough furs to pay for the voyage and leave a small profit. Meanwhile De Chastes had died. De Monts was now president of the company, which was enlarged for the dual purpose of acquiring more capital to meet the costs of colonization, and of silencing powerful antagonists in other parts. Shares were allotted to Rouen, St. Malo and La Rochelle, and also to St. Jean de Luz, the home port of the Basque whalers. De Monts' personal investment was something more than ten percent of the whole. The canny stroke of including rival ports failed to bring peace. Opposition sprang up in a new quarter. The French hatters, fearing an increase in the price of beaver, cast about in all directions for means to break the monopoly. So, presently, at their instigation largely, certain members of the Parliament of Normandy formed a cabal against De Monts as a huguenot. They denounced, with pious fervor, the horrid sin of entrusting Indian souls to a heretic. Navarre, himself, stilled this storm with the promise to export priests for the salvation of the savages.

Fully as serious as the madness of the hatters was the resolute opposition of Sully, the King's powerful minister. Sully has been called the most able statesman of his time. He saw the immense work to be done at home; and he counted, in advance, the cost of it. He did not believe that the French genius lay in the direction of colonization; and he feared further drains on the treasury to maintain American colonies, and to protect them from attacks by other

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European nations. He thought France would be a great deal safer without colonies three thousand miles across the sea. Sully's counsel had great weight with the King, whom he served not only efficiently but brilliantly. So that sometimes Henry helped his colonizing fur-trading friends, but often he left them to fight their own battles. Canada was colonized, and the new commerce of the North American Fur Trade was initiated, because of the courage, steadfastness and self-sacrifice of four Frenchmen—De Monts, Champlain, Pontgravé and Poutrincourt.

Under the terms of the new commission granted to De Monts, the company was to occupy not only the territory about the mouth of the St. Lawrence, but also the region of Acadia in Nova Scotia, to prevent Acadia from seizure by some other nation, presumably the English. It was to transport a hundred colonists yearly from France, to seek the strait, or river, which led to China, and to prospect for mines—for surely God had not buried all the gold and jewels of the New World in the lands seized by the Spanish! Above all, it was to enlarge commerce with the natives—which meant furs.

It was understood that New France would stand, or fall, according to the value of the Fur Trade.



CHAPTER IV

BEAVER DRAWS THE PLOW

DE MONTS did not follow the example of his predecessors in his selection of settlers. He avoided the gaols and the alleys and offered his inducements to respectable folk whose worthy qualities were lightened with a flicker, at least, of romance, enough to make them leave tried paths for new. He and his three staunch friends sailed early in 1604 with about one hundred and thirty colonists. These were chiefly artisans, though there was a goodly sprinkling of poor gentlemen, and noblemen without fortune, among them.

They reached the coast of Acadia and saw it green with spring. Poutrincourt was so entranced by the beauty of Annapolis Bay and by the natural pastures, which reminded him of his meadows at home, that he begged a

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grant of Acadia from De Monts. Here was a region, not only rich in furs, but which called to the plowman and the herder. For himself, he may have seen it as a place of spiritual peace, a haven of simplicity, where his chivalric ideal of courage with honor could find new tasks worthy of it, and be free of the subtleties and sophistries which had once turned it awry to serve a base cause. The dream took shape in him to move his family to this place, and to make Acadia the seat of the future barons of his line. His dream was to end shortly, and strangely; and to bring to a strange end the Biencourts, whose knightly deeds had made glory and song in Picardy for five centuries.

There was much to be done before Pontgravé should sail home. With the duties of trade and of fuller exploration of the region pressing upon the leaders, possibly too little thought went into selecting the site for the settlement. St. Croix Island was a bad choice. It was unsheltered from every blast of winter; and that first winter was evidently unusually severe. There was no game on the island. The colonists did not venture to cross the bay ice to hunt on the mainland. They did not realize the necessity of fresh meat to keep them in health. Scurvy and cold brought death to many of them. Yet, when spring returned, only a few of the survivors desired to go home in Pontgravé's ship.

A new site was selected. The Acadians pulled down their houses, moved the material to the north shore and built again in a sheltered spot overlooking the beautiful harbor which Champlain had named Port Royal. Pontgravé had brought seeds. As soon as the houses were up again, the settlers began to make gardens. Champlain, who was in command, because Poutrincourt had gone to France for

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more colonists, made his first acquaintance with the soil and was delighted with it. From his detailed description of his own garden, it must have resembled, in miniature, some park or estate at home which had caught his fancy. He dug ditches about it for trout and he also made a salt water pool in which the little fishes of the sea could wait comfortably for their place on the menu. He installed an elaborate system of sluice gates to keep his brooks clear and fresh. Fine meadows surrounded the place, and there was a group of beautiful trees which he converted into a summerhouse. The colonists resorted to his summerhouse frequently for picnics, or for rest, and there in leisure hours they sang the old French songs which can still be heard in the homes of the Canadian *habitants*, and in the trappers' camps of the Northwest. He writes, "It seemed as if the little birds round took pleasure in it, for they gathered there in large numbers, warbling and chirping so pleasantly that I think I have never heard the like." Champlain's garden was a short interval of tenderness in a life of stress and hardship. Paradoxically, he loved his trout brooks, his summerhouse and his green peas the more, because it was not in his nature to beat the sword into a plowshare.

Meanwhile affairs went ill in France. Poutrincourt, who had expected to return during the summer with more settlers, was delayed for nearly a year by lawsuits. De Monts, too, was obliged to go to France in order to defend his monopoly against a new attack by a stronger cabal of merchants and hatters. Only Beaver could found New France, only Beaver could maintain it; but it seemed that Beaver was about to destroy it! There were but four men

BEAVER DRAWS THE PLOW

always—and, sometimes, their King—who cared about colonies.

Poutrincourt's lawsuits, settled anon in Paris, resulted interestingly for Acadia by giving it Marc Lescarbot as a colonist. Lescarbot, a lawyer of distinction, and a man of broad culture, and no mean poet, may have caught the fever of adventure from his own fiery oratory in his patron's behalf in the Paris courts. At any rate he arrived full of enthusiasm, which never dwindled. He wrote an account of his life at Port Royal. It is a rich little book. He and Champlain related many of the same incidents, but how different the telling! Champlain, the man of action, made a record of those years without fancy. He is more nearly romantic about the birds in his summerhouse than about anything else in his experience. Lescarbot's book is the work of a poet and a philosopher. No less curious about facts than Champlain, he believed that the chief use for facts was to expand the mind; kindle the aesthetic imagination and thereby induct men into that "good life" which must be lived above the tangible. He is an outstanding example of this type in the frontier annals of North America, but the type was present in other pioneer settlements. Strangely present, we may think, since pioneer life in the savage wilderness would seem to appeal only to hardy adventurers. Yet the Lescarbots, of whatever nationality, were on many frontiers, weaving some color from the arts and sciences into the crude primitive patterns of pioneer life.

When dreary weather came again, and sickness threatened, Champlain doctored the little colony with fun instead of physic. He instituted the Order of the Good Time. For the better story about it, of course, we turn to Lescar-

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bot's pages. The fifteen men at the baron's table comprised the Order. In turn, each man was Chief Steward for one day, and it was his duty to supply the meals. Lescarbot writes:

There was no one, who, two days before his turn came, failed to go hunting or fishing, and to bring back some delicacy in addition to our ordinary fare. So well was this carried out that never at breakfast did we lack some savoury meat of flesh or fish, and still less at our midday, or evening meals; for that was our chief banquet, at which the ruler of the feast, or Chief Steward, whom the savages called Atoctegic, having had everything prepared by the cook, marched in napkin on shoulder, wand of office in hand, and around his neck the collar of the Order, which was worth more than four crowns; after him all the members of the Order, each carrying a dish. The same was repeated at dessert, though not always with so much pomp. And, at night, before giving thanks to God, he handed over to his successor in the charge the collar of the Order, with a cup of wine, and they drank to each other.

The settlers were influenced by the example of the Order to range the woods for game for their own pots. As a consequence they lived largely on fresh meat, during that second winter, and were in good health. Only those who were too lazy to go hunting suffered from scurvy. The Indians, always keen lovers of both drama and fun, came in parties, brought deer, and acquired a taste for French bread. Their chief, Membertou, who had known Cartier and was more than a hundred years old but as brisk as his great-grandsons, was an honored guest at Poutrincourt's table. Later in the new year, when Champlain and Poutrincourt returned from a voyage of exploration, Port Royal welcomed them with a pageant written in rhyme by Lescarbot for the occasion. The costumes were made of whatever Acadia afforded for so imposing a theatrical pro-

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duction, including long-stemmed moss for Neptune's hair. The Indian supers took part with dancing and music; even old Membertou danced. The pageant was not only "a jovial spectacle" but "a ceremony absolutely new on this side of the ocean" its author remarks with some complacency.

Lescarbot loved gardening more than trading. During spring and summer he worked in his garden, even until late in the evening when the moon gave him light, "so great a desire had I to know the soil by personal experience." He wondered how men born to it could leave it and, stranger still, despise it. Farming, he reminds us, was once the honored avocation of kings. That a little chill sometimes fell upon the relations of Lescarbot and Champlain we gather from both men's writings. Champlain appeared overcredulous to his better educated friend. For instance, on his Spanish-American tour, Champlain had heard of the Mexican griffin which was said to live in the interior deserts. He even drew a picture of it, composed from descriptions. He believed in a narrow continent and a passage from the St. Lawrence to China. Lescarbot denied the griffin, doubted the passage and poked fun. Champlain thought that critical comments on both griffins and geography came improperly from a city lawyer who had never even been on the sea until he sailed to Port Royal—and who was, besides, a bookworm and a poet. However, he took no exception to the generous eulogy in verse which Lescarbot wrote about *him*. Both loved the soil; and their hearts were sunny when they visited each other's gardens and, together, sniffed the good odors of new-turned earth, or looked at green shoots springing.

There was another garden where a man, who had not

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known the soil before, dug and planted with a fervent heart. This was the garden of Louis Hébert. Hébert had closed a small shop of apothecary's wares in Paris to try his fortune in Poutrincourt's colony. It is not straining fancy to see, in Hébert's garden, the beginning of agricultural Canada. His statue stands in Quebec today, as a monument to the first *habitant*. His skill with pestle and mortar, his knowledge of herbs, surely contributed to the well-being of Port Royal; for, later on, in Quebec, he was compelled to serve with his knowledge of medicines as a condition of his land tenure. What a contrast for Hébert between this broad Acadian garden and the poor apothecary's dingy narrow quarters in a back street of Paris, where only a little sunlight filtered in, and spiders spun their webs in the corners!

There would be healing weeds drying in the sun somewhere on Louis Hébert's place; wild cherry bark, too, probably. He must have gathered a few familiar herbs in Acadian meadows and learned about the medicinal properties of others from the Indian doctors. Doubtless also, he tasted the red men's spruce tea, and the very potent tonic which they distilled from the juniper berry.

Three years of trading, hunting and plowing, and the colony had taken root. At Port Royal, Champlain had a base for his explorations and trading journeys along the coast; and De Monts, a firmly founded settlement to aid in the establishment of the second colony, which he projected, on the St. Lawrence. Poutrincourt was now ready to bring out his family. But, in France, De Monts' commercial rivals had gained power with the aid of the Mad Hatters and other trade guilds handling fur. The weapon of bigotry was always within reach and they used it. Sully's dis-

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approval of colonization helped them. Henry was absorbed in foreign policy. In the spring of 1607 Pontgravé brought the bad news that the monopoly had been withdrawn. The makers of gardens had no rights now in the soil they loved. Port Royal was abandoned on August 11th and the colonists sailed for France.

Between April and August of the same year, the English had founded Jamestown in Virginia. While the Acadians were on the sea bound for France—their trading post, their cabins and gardens deserted—Chief Powhatan sent a deer as a gift to the president of the council at Jamestown; and beaver for trade. In the years to come, we shall see fur traders from Virginia and the Carolinas and their Indian friends fighting pitched battles with French traders from Canada and their red allies in the wilderness, beyond the frontiers of settlement, for the furs of the Mississippi region. The hatters, the jealous traders, the bigots, who have forced the withdrawal of De Monts' monopoly and the abandonment of Acadia, have done France small service in this fateful year, 1607.

The enemy had struck a winning blow, suddenly, in the dark. But the four friends, whose beautiful adventure had been so summarily ended, had no intention of giving up. Poutrincourt was determined to regain Port Royal; and he had faith that he could, once he came face to face again with the man who had sought his friendship while besieging his castle. De Monts and Champlain were as determined, on their part, to build a post on the St. Lawrence above Tadoussac, which would serve not only as a fixed trading centre but as a base for Champlain's explorations of this great waterway leading to China.

Poutrincourt's affair was the more difficult to adjust. It

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lung fire and Poutrincourt remained in Paris, while Henry waited his chance to give him back Acadia. That would be in some fortunate moment when Sully and the trade guilds and other antagonists of Acadia should fall out with one another about some other matter! The King could and did do something immediately for De Monts, though it was not much. He gave him a monopoly of the Fur Trade for one year—of course, with no obligation to ~~colonize~~—to enable him to recoup his losses in founding Port Royal. De Monts induced two wealthy merchants to join him and sent Pontgravé, the mariner perpetual, to the St. Lawrence to open trade. Champlain sailed a week later with building materials and armament for a strong fortified trading post and with the artisans to erect it. He arrived on a scene of trouble. Pontgravé was in a battle royal with the Basques, who had seized the post at Tadousac and were using cannon as well as small arms in their effort to drive De Monts' ship from the river. Pontgravé, himself, was seriously wounded. The appearance of De Monts' second vessel spoiled the plans of the Basques for the time being. They made peace; but they refused to stop their illegal trading. A number of them even followed Champlain up the river later to snatch a share of his trade or, possibly, with a less pacific purpose in mind.

Champlain decided that the best site for the new trading post was at the foot of a promontory which the Indians called "ké-bec," meaning "where the waters meet." He went ashore early in July 1608 and began building. The work of erecting the first permanent outpost of France in the land of the Beaver did not go smoothly. It seems evident that the Basques bribed some of Champlain's men to murder him and to turn the new post of Quebec over to

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them. The conspiracy failed because one of the men weakened and told Champlain of the plot. Champlain had the ringleader hanged and his head cut off and mounted on a pike above the wall as a warning to all traitors and Basques.

At the end of the season Pontgravé sailed home, his ship packed deep with furs. The Basques also departed with their whale oil and poachers' loot of peltry. Champlain and twenty-eight companions remained to winter with cold and disease. They hunted little, if at all, during the winter, and went without fresh meat which had banished scurvy and restored health and spirits at Port Royal. When Pontgravé returned in the spring, only Champlain and eight men were alive to greet him.

The one-year monopoly was now ended. De Monts persuaded his partners to continue with him, arguing that possession of the post of Quebec would give them a great advantage over their competitors on the river. De Monts, like Champlain, was whole-heartedly devoted to the aims of colonization and exploration. Even with no favors from the crown he would at least try gradually to build up a colony on the returns from his trade. His partners were indifferent to the glorious dream of French empire in the New World, and they soon became disgusted with the venture. Profits were small now that competition was cheapening beaver. De Monts dug deep into his pocket and bought them out. No doubt he hoped for help again later on from Henry, who had been his only source of aid in France. That hope was ended by Henry's assassination in 1610. Huguenots found cold welcome at the court now that the queen, Marie de Medici, was regent. So Champlain went to France to undertake the negotiations which De Monts

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could no longer carry on with any hope of success. Champlain fully agreed with De Monts that a monopoly was essential if colonization and exploration were to continue. Regarding the rival traders, Champlain says, justly:

It is not reasonable that one should capture the lamb and another go off with the fleece. If they had been willing to participate in our discoveries, use their means and risk their persons, they would have given evidence of their honor and nobility; but, on the contrary, they show clearly that they are impelled by pure malice, that they may enjoy the fruit of our labors equally with ourselves.

Experience had shown De Monts and Champlain that not only was a monopoly essential to their adventure, but also a powerful patron who would see to it that the monopoly was not withdrawn. Champlain addressed himself to the task of securing both. It took time, and it uncovered much that had a bad odor in the nostrils of an honest man. Champlain was patient, he had a calm, equable temper, a large measure of tact, and an unrelenting will. At last, in 1614, after frequent delays and mishaps, he attained his ends. A new company was formed and a patron of the blood royal, with the title of Viceroy of New France, received the monopoly and sublet it for a thousand crowns per annum to the company. The first patron died almost immediately, but his title of Viceroy and his monopoly passed to the Prince de Condé. The monopoly was for eleven years and specified the Fur Trade of the region above Quebec. The company included merchants of Rouen, St. Malo and La Rochelle: they agreed to take out six families of colonists annually. Champlain was appointed Lieutenant to the Viceroy, with a small salary; and he was given author-

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ity to call four men from each ship, as he might desire, to serve in exploration.

As of yore, he and De Monts and Pontgravé were the only members of the company who were interested in colonization. In fact, their new associates, perhaps perceiving that fur-bearing animals and colonists could not long occupy the same territory, and knowing that colonists were an expense and furs a profit, discouraged settlement. The first real settler came out in 1617; and the company shamelessly broke its contract with him. He was the little apothecary who had first turned soil in Acadia twelve years before. When Louis Hébert arrived on the St. Lawrence, Quebec was still only a trading post.

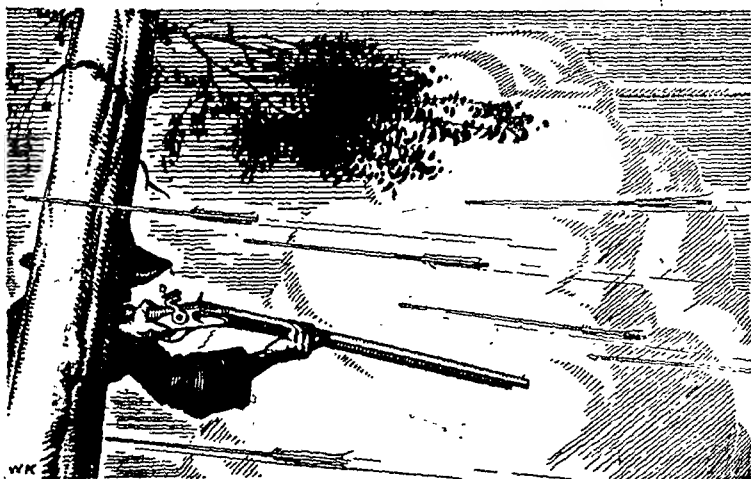
In the meantime, what of Acadia? Poutrincourt had not misplaced his faith in the chivalric love borne him by the man whose white plume had once waved vainly before adamant walls in Picardy. Henry gave him back his Acadian barony. Poutrincourt and his son, Charles de Biencourt, took out a few settlers and began the re-establishment of Port Royal in 1610, the year of Henry's death and three years after the English planting of Jamestown. Whatever cabins the Indians had let stand were in disrepair; the gardens were wild soil once more, with weeds and tiny timber in the old furrows. All that had been done before must now be done over again, with few hands to do it. Young Biencourt fell in love with Acadia. His youth responded to its freedom; the adventurous, romantic temperament, which was his heritage as a noble gentleman of Picardy, found a new form of expression in long hunting excursions with the Indians. Plumed helmet and coat of mail, the badges of romantic quest worn by Biencourts since before the Crusades, were put by permanently for the fur, or dyed deer-

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skin, cap and the painted eagle feather. Feudal relations with inferiors and superiors alike were past for Charles de Biencourt. The Indians were his comrades on equal terms and the wilderness, where they roamed together, was a land without a master. Frequently he had the companionship of his friend, young Charles de La Tour, who shared his love of the new type of adventure, though his adherence to the old traditions was stronger.

Poutrincourt left his small colony in his son's care and returned to France, to attend to certain affairs there. In 1613 Captain Argall of Virginia sailed up the coast and destroyed Port Royal. Biencourt and La Tour took refuge with the Indians.

Ten years later Charles de La Tour returned from the wilds to settle at the place now called Port Latour, where he built Fort St. Louis. There are La Tours in Nova Scotia to this day. The ties of the mother country must have been stronger, with the Baron de Poutrincourt, than he had believed in 1604, when he determined to leave Picardy and make Acadia his home; for, in 1615, he died, sword in hand, on a battlefield of France. The passion, which drew his son to a different end, was as strong, and it was older—nostalgia for mankind's first home, the wilderness. The last of the Biencourts of Picardy slips from our view into the green dusk of the Canadian forest.



CHAPTER V

CHAMPLAIN EXPLORES THE BEAVER TRAIL

SO FAR we have observed Champlain chiefly in his work as a colonist, at Port Royal and Quebec. We come now to consideration of Champlain the explorer, who opened the trail to the vast Beaver Lands of the western interior. During his four years as colonist he also made voyages. In fact from 1603 to 1616, when he was not founding or overseeing a colony, or exercising patient diplomacy in France, or busy in his local fur emporium, he was inland with his Algonkin friends or creeping along the coast with an eye out for furs, good trading post sites, and the strait to China.

It must be remembered that, like Quebec, Port Royal had been founded because the Fur Trade needed French settlements in America as much as French colonies needed the Fur Trade. Champlain and his companions had seen

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clearly from the beginning that, without the colonies, the French fur-traders would have no security; for England might plant settlements on that northern coast and bar Frenchmen from the St. Lawrence and its furs. Gosnold, who had already sailed and traded along the coast south of Cartier's river, might return at any time with comrades of his own type and fasten an English grip upon that shore. It was vital that De Monts' company should take hold first.

So no sooner had Champlain seen Poutrincourt's settlement well begun than he set sail to explore the coast to the south. This was his first voyage of exploration from an American base. His motives in undertaking it were those which inspired all his brilliant exploits as an explorer—furs, and the dream in his heart. He had heard of "the great river of the Norumbega," which was said to flow through that region, and which might be the direct waterway to China.

The first voyage was followed by another almost immediately. In a barque which Pontgravé fitted out for the purpose, Champlain skirted islands and capes and poked into bays and rivers from Acadia to southern Massachusetts. He discovered and named Mount Desert and Isle Au Haut. The mouth of the Penobscot invited, and he entered, in spite of "islands, rocks, shoals, banks, and breakers which are so numerous on all sides that it is marvellous to behold." According to the geographical knowledge then at his disposal, he recognized the Penobscot as the fabled "great river of the Norumbega," and he sailed up it almost to the site of Bangor. It did not lead to China; nor did the Kennebec. In fact, "there are none of the marvels there which some persons have described." Nevertheless there

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were features to be noted, which, at first glance, looked promising to colonists and traders.

The Indian population was much larger than that of the Acadian region. Apparently they were in the transition stage between nomads and agriculturists. They lived in permanent towns surrounded by high palisades. There were fields round about, sown with maize, squashes, pumpkins and artichokes. Wild grapes were abundant. Champlain observed "fine meadows capable of supporting a large number of cattle." Since understatement was a habit, almost a vice, with Champlain we can guess how entranced he was with one beautiful harbor when he calls it a "very pleasant place" and describes its trees as "very fine." The month was September, not June as in Moody's imperishable poem; so perhaps "Jill-o'er-the-ground" was not "purple blue," nor "blue the quaker-maid": Champlain never expressed an interest in wild flowers. It was Moody's Gloucester Harbor which tempted the restrained French chronicler to the riotous use of an adverb: where now,

Scattering wide or blown in ranks,
Yellow and white and brown
Boats and boats from the fishing banks
Come home to Gloucester town.

Two hundred Indians were living here. He gives their names as Armouchiquois. They were of the Algonkin family. He came upon a larger village at Cape Cod, his farthest south. At Cape Cod he saw more than five hundred Indians, maize over five feet high, and tobacco as well as a variety of squashes. Like the Indians at Gloucester, these also were sturdy, well-fed tillers of the soil, dwellers in a smiling land.

Yet, despite the plentiful food supply and the charms of

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this country, Champlain and his partners sailed away to Acadia and never even considered returning to found settlements. The reason can be seen in his few lines about trading at Cape Cod.

They bartered away to us their bows, arrows, and quivers for pins and buttons: and if they had had anything else better they would have done the same with it.

Anything else better! Furs. The Indians of Massachusetts were poor in peltry. In the "very pleasant" euphony of those forests and fields there was no clicking sound of strong hatchet-like molars felling young poplars for beaver dams on a wide network of streams; and the French plan of North American colonization was carried in a beaver-skin pouch.

Among the Indians, who came through the fields of tall maize greening that coast, to trade arrows for pins and to watch French sails disappear to the north, was there, by chance, a young brave named Squanto? Very likely. Fifteen years later Squanto was teaching Pilgrims how to fertilize the soil with fish, how to grow corn. Son of farm folk himself, he was soon welcome and at home among these English, who had been chiefly farm folk, too, before persecution drove them to Holland and cloth-making. The French, in pursuit of fur, left the land of maize open to a people who would seek permanency in America through the sanction of the soil. One may see a touch of fate, a hint of prophecy, if one will, in Champlain's farewell to Massachusetts, which was soon to become New England and to grow apace with farms and little townships. When at last, many years later, the French were to become aware of the value, and the menace, of New England, and to erect

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their strong fortification of Louisburg in Nova Scotia—which they had left as vulnerable as a bare shoulder in the days of armor—they were too late. There was then no possibility of loosening the English hold upon the coast of America, at the door of New France; nor of stopping the march of colonial traders inland to barter with, and to influence, tribes hostile to the French. The mystic soothsayer, popularly alluded to as Destiny, foretold the fall of Canada in two events of her beginning. One event was the abandonment of Port Royal in the year of Jamestown; which began an English occupation that spread quickly to the Carolinas and opened trails for its power, from the headquarters of the southern Fur Trade in Charleston, through all the hinterland to the Mississippi. The other was the failure to seize the territory immediately south of the St. Lawrence. Not only did the English take root there and grow like a green bay tree; but presently they fell heirs to the Dutch planting on the Hudson river and took over the Dutch trade with the Mohawks of the powerful Iroquois Confederacy—another knife-thrust at French power in the hinterland.

Happily, the future is not disclosed to mortals. Champlain sailed home to Acadia, with an untroubled mind, never to return after his two looks at “very pleasant” Massachusetts.

The story of his voyages did not lack that touch of superstition which roused Lescarbot’s mirth in regard to the Mexican griffin. Supernatural beings of dreadful mien have infested the paths of sailors ever since man, a land animal, first put out upon the sea, and shipped a cargo of fears with him. In the neighborhood of Anticosti—or Natiskotek, in Micmac speech, meaning “the hunting ground

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of the bear"—Champlain heard of the frightful monster, Gougou. Gougou dwelt on an isle near Chaleur Bay. He hissed and roared and he threw great rocks about, and none could withstand him. The Indians were not the only ones who had actually heard Gougou and seen his monstrous misty shape looming out of his island. No, this was no myth of naïve savages. Champlain met a Breton gentleman, Sieur de Prevert, who owned fishing vessels and who, doubtless, was pirating fur on De Monts' concession at the time. The Sieur de Prevert confirmed all that the natives had told Champlain about Gougou. He knew from personal experience. Champlain, credulous of mind yet devoted to the style of understatement, which is a recent literary fad with us, says:

If I were to record all they say it would be considered untrue, but I hold that this is the dwelling place of some devil that torments them in the manner described. This is what I have learned about this Gougou.

Gougou was a creature of Micmac mythology: he personified earthquake. Champlain saw his island, believed in him, and did not flee. Whether death menaced from natural, or supernatural, realms Champlain faced it calmly. We are almost tempted to believe in a myth ourselves; namely, that Champlain really was that superhuman "man who never felt fear," whom we have been told about in so many adventure stories.

After he had founded Quebec in 1608 Champlain made the three journeys into the wilderness on which his fame as an explorer chiefly rests. By its situation Quebec was dependent, as a fur mart, upon the Indians of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa valleys. These Algonkin tribes were hereditary foes of the Iroquois, who were stronger than

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they and, at least, as fierce. The Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy—Oneidas, Cayugas, Senecas, Onondagas and Mohawks—dwelt in their strongly built and palisaded Long Houses south of Lake Ontario. From time to time, as the humor seized them, they would sally forth to burn Algonkin towns, or to murder Algonkin hunting parties. Unless these forays could be checked, preferably by a successful punitive expedition into the Iroquois' own territory, the routes to Quebec would soon become too perilous for Algonkins to travel. So the Algonkins told Champlain, and requested him to prove his friendship by going to war with them against their enemies.

In 1609 Champlain, accompanied by twenty Frenchmen and his Algonkin allies, took the war path. The Indians numbered sixty and travelled in twenty-four canoes. The French, who took supplies with them, were in a shallop. At Chambly their careful plans went agley. The shallop could not pass the falls. Champlain must choose one of two bad alternatives. Should he unload the shallop and continue with all his men and goods scattered through the Indian canoes, thus inviting theft and treachery? Or should he send most of the crew and the goods home in the shallop, and risk only himself and one or two men who might dare to follow him into the Iroquois country? He thought the latter would be the wiser course. So Pontgravé's son-in-law, Des Marais, took the shallop and seventeen men home. Champlain writes:

I was much troubled. And it gave me especial dissatisfaction to go back without seeing a very large lake, filled with handsome islands and with large tracts of fine land bordering on the lake, where their enemies lived, according to their representations. . . . I determined to go and fulfil my promise and carry out my desire.

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Selecting two men, "who went willingly," he said *au revoir* to Des Marais and assured him that, "by God's grace, he would return." When the Indians knew that not twenty-one but only three Frenchmen would accompany them, they wanted to turn back. Champlain persuaded them to go on.

They came upon the Iroquois at Ticonderoga, a name later to become famous in the war annals of this continent. The muskets of the three Frenchmen gave the Iroquois their first experience of white man's warfare. Seeing their chiefs fall dead at the first few shots, the Iroquois were terror-stricken. They fled. Champlain and his allies pursued them into the woods and killed a number of them. Much corn, armor and weapons, were the victors' spoils.

Here stretched the fine lake which the explorer had so desired to see: and he gave it his own name.

The Indians told him that a good route led from this place to a large river "flowing into the sea on the Norumbega coast"; but Champlain did not venture to go in search of the river with his two French companions. They were already much deeper in the wilderness than white men had ever gone before. At Ticonderoga Champlain was within eighty miles of the site of Albany. The time was the beginning of August. Had Champlain followed the route to the river, he would have discovered the Hudson on its upper stream, and claimed its valley for France, a little earlier than September 4th, when Henry Hudson sailed the little Dutch ship, the *Half Moon*, into its mouth.

It did not matter so much on the day when Champlain turned homeward from Ticonderoga that the *fleur-de-lys* was not blooming on the bank of a river eighty miles south. As to the Iroquois, all that had happened was cause for re-

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joining. They would leave the Algonkin fur hunters in peace for a while; and the hatred engendered in them against the French was of small consequence, being so well mixed with fear of French muskets. But, in another month, Hudson lay off Manhattan Island and five years later the Dutch built Fort Nassau, presently called Fort Orange, on the site of Albany; and, four years later yet, they made their first treaty with the Iroquois.

Champlain's next excursion into the wilderness was made in 1613. Intervening years had been passed chiefly in political circles in France. While bigots, trade guilds, rival traders and petty politicians bickered and hampered the Quebec colony, the Dutch took root firmly on the Hudson. In 1613, when Champlain made a hasty visit to his Indian friends, who had been told that he was dead, and spent the summer in exploration, Argall of Jamestown destroyed Port Royal.

With Dutch and English closing in, it became more necessary than ever to discover the strait to China, and to secure its shores for France. This was the purpose of Champlain's journey in the summer of 1613. He set out in high hope; for now he had positive evidence on which to rely. From the beginning of his contact with the Indians on the St. Lawrence, he had sent young men to live in their towns, to learn the language, the Indian's woodcraft and whatever else the natives knew which might serve white men in the forest. One of these young men was Nicolas Vignau. Vignau cruelly deceived Champlain in the affair dearest to his heart. He told a thrilling tale of having followed the Ottawa river into a lake which emptied, in its turn, into the "North Sea." On the shore of that great water he had seen the "débris of an English ship that had

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been wrecked, on board of which were eighty men who had escaped to the shore and whom the savages had killed." Thus and with more embroideries, Vignau discoursed. Champlain questioned and cross-questioned this petty romancer and demanded that he swear to the truth before two notaries. Vignau swore glibly, and likewise made a solemn vow to guide his commander to the very place. The month of May saw Champlain on his way inland with four Frenchmen, one Indian and Vignau to guide them. The passage of the Ottawa, with its falls and long rapids, was very difficult and dangerous, and Vignau had been confident that Champlain would retreat. He seems to have had no understanding whatever of his leader's character. Champlain nearly lost his life in the rapids, sustained a painful injury, and kept on. His perilous pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp ended when he reached an Algonkin village on an island in Lake Allumette. The Indians told him that Vignau had been in their village during the months when, according to his sworn statements, he was examining the débris of an English ship on the shore of the North Sea. They wanted to kill the impostor who had dealt treacherously with their good friend, but Champlain protected him. He says however that his anger was so great that he could not endure the sight of him for some time. Characteristically, he marks no pages with the anguish of his disappointment. He may have left a memento of the dream that died on this hazardous trail; for, a few years ago, an astrolabe, which was probably his, was picked up near Muskrat Lake.

At this time, the summer of 1613, the appointment of a Viceroy and the granting of a monopoly of the trade on the St. Lawrence still hung fire in France. Therefore

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beaver was for any and every man who came after it. When Champlain reached the head of navigation the river below was aswarm with barques. Here at Lachine was the first great open air country fair in this continent north of the Spanish possessions.

At sunrise graceful birch canoes, with feathered paddlers, darted in and out among the anchored ships like swallows among cliffs. The skilful play of the canoes, the shouts, and the coppery fists lifted to shake dark glossy pelts in the air, were both a welcome and a challenge. A few skins and goods probably changed hands over the deck rails, but the beaver pelts shaken out to let the reddened sunlight discover their richness, were bait to lure the traders ashore. All morning, perhaps, the ships' boats would be carrying cloth, mirrors of bright metal, beads, knives, dry cod, to rudely improvised booths, or stations, ashore. Everything might be in readiness by noon for the trade to begin, but such haste was never the red men's idea of good form. They approached all public affairs with ceremony and drama. Barter must wait, while feasting, smoking and oratory had their turn. Then came music; dancing, singing, and more dancing, to the shrieking whistles and the rolling drums.

The first country fair, by the St. Lawrence rapids, must have been a beautiful and barbaric spectacle. Several hundred Basque and Norman fishermen in the individual costumes of their caste, and Bretons in blue, red and purple coats, whirled and stamped, among a thousand or more Indians, whose naked bodies glistened like wet copper in the summer heat. A medley of tongues rivalled the instrumental din: Norman French, the Brythonic dialect of the Breton Celts, Algonkin, and the Eskuara of the Basques



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—this last, like Algonkin, an agglutinative language, and almost as primitive. The Indians, with horns spreading from their brows and rattling hoofs in their hands, leaped, milled, spread apart and herded again in the fleet movements of their caribou dances, as their ancients had done in the days beyond memory; celebrating the prehistoric hunter's chase of one of the oldest, perhaps the oldest of all, game animals on this continent. And the Basques personated wolves, bears, horses—whatever beasts might inspire their fancy for imitation—in the animal dances which lingered then, and still linger, from their own dim and misty beginnings. There was no less wildness in the dances and songs of the Bretons. At that date Christianity had not yet taken root in all parts of Brittany. Among the bright-coated, blue-bonneted Celts at festival in the Quebec forest were men as pagan as the Indians.

Because Basques and Bretons were hardly less primitive than the red men, were closest to them in culture, we would expect to see them dominant in French relations with the tribes. Yet they were not. They were prevented by their conservatism, another trait and habit of life in which they strongly resembled the Indians. Proud, self-sufficient folk, watchfully guarding their identity and their antique ways, and suspicious of all ways that were different, they resisted at home the slow persistent encroachment of French speech and French codes; and, in the New World, they were little inclined to learn the language and customs of the natives. Automatically, being what they were, they left the leadership in establishing friendship and co-operation with the Indian tribes to another folk, the Normans.

The Normans were as hardy, venturesome and warlike as the Basques and Bretons, but they were more civilized.

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They were French, their language was French and their customs were the customs which their Viking ancestors had found in the north of France when they conquered it and made it Northman's-Land, or Normandy. In the Viking Age, dread of the plundering, pagan Norsemen lay like a black cloud upon the shores of Europe. Not only did the Vikings sally forth to harry and to plunder but also to seek new homes. They planted in Russia, Ireland, Sicily, France and Great Britain by power of the sword. Once firmly footed, they adopted the laws, the religion and the customs of the conquered people. There is no more adaptable man in history than the Norseman. He had no sooner settled as victor on the broad smiling acres of northern France than he put on French clothes, began to learn French speech, and repaired for baptism to the nearest church where, so recently, and so vainly, trembling worshippers had chanted an addition to the litany, inspired by him: "From the fury of the Northmen, Good Lord deliver us!"

The Norseman was hail-fellow-well-met with strangers; he was penetrative and subtle in his dealings with them, if the dealings were not to be better done by steel; he was interested in everything new; he was imitative. Yet, withal, he kept the essence of himself. There was something individual and potent at his core, and it has marked the peoples and the lands which he made his own.

Looking for the Norman among the whirling merry-makers at the fur hunters' country fair, we should find him, most likely, prancing with the Indians in the caribou dance, his red cap tossed aside, his face smeared with paint, and antlers on his head. During the lulls for eating and

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smoking, he would be squatting by the red men's fire, learning a word or two, asking the names of things.

"How do you call this?" with gestures, imitating the animal, to interpret his question.

"*Caribou*."

"And this?" fingering a small dark pelt with white markings.

"*Segongw*"—a tricky guttural there, which seems to toss off the beginning of another syllable.

"Ah-h! *S'gong-k!*" Skunk, to us.

As the years passed, and the St. Lawrence valley beaver with them, the ingratiating Norman would lead the Fur Trade far beyond the habitat of these tribes. Dressed like an Indian, able to live and, more important, to think like one, he would meet new tribes as an old comrade come home. Such was the Norman, leader of France's vast fur empire in the New World: all things to all men; in Normandy, the ardent Frenchman; in England, more British than the Britons; in the North American forest, an Indian brave in everything but race.

Furs were the motive of Champlain's last and longest expedition into the wilderness. In the summer of 1615, the Hurons, whose allies, the Algonkins, had inducted them into the trade with the French, informed Champlain that, unless he would return with them and help them crush the Onondagas, they would no longer dare to make the trip to the rapids. They told him that they could muster two thousand warriors of their own tribe and they offered to become catholics and to receive a missionary in their towns on Georgian Bay. The Algonkins caught the spirit of the thing—as to the attack on the Iroquois, not the march on heaven—and enthusiastically promised to send five hun-

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dred braves to help. The religious call was responded to by Father Le Caron of the Recollets, who set off almost immediately for Huronia with the first returning trappers. Champlain waited to see Pontgravé's ship float off down the river packed with furs; then he departed for the interior with a small company of his Norman musketeers and his Huron guides.

His former farthest-west had been Allumette Island in the Ottawa river, where he had discovered the treachery of Vignau. From Allumette he went on now up the Ottawa and Mattawa rivers to Lake Nipissing, and thence, by French river, into Lake Huron at Georgian Bay. Here the major force of Huron braves joined him with a fleet of canoes. The five hundred Algonkins, however, let the promises, which they had made at the rapids, suffice for their presence on the war path. Champlain and his red army entered Lake Ontario at the Bay of Quinte, crossed the lake at its eastern end, hid their canoes on the south shore and, by a swift stealthy march through the woods, descended on the Onondaga stronghold which was situated by a pond to the south of Lake Oneida.

The town was one of the best protected of the famous Long Houses of the Iroquois. It was surrounded by a palisade thirty feet high; gutters filled with water were ready in case of fire. It was practically impregnable to enemies armed only with arrows. Champlain's plan of attack was to erect a high platform close to the wall, and to station musketeers on it, who would keep up a steady fusillade upon the Onondagas while the Hurons set the palisade on fire. Carried out fully, the plan should have effected the extinction of the Onondagas. But the Hurons, scenting victory too soon, lost their heads completely. The conflagration

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gration failed because they gathered too few dry sticks to start it. They pranced, war whooped, shot their arrows blindly, and threw away their wooden shields as a mere hindrance to insulting gestures. Champlain's disgust was profound.

After fighting in this disorderly and ineffectual fashion for three hours, the Hurons withdrew. Champlain suffered from two severe wounds, in his leg and knee. The Huron casualties were slight. The number of Onondagas killed by French muskets is not known. It was sufficient to add hatred to hatred against the French in Iroquois hearts. The hatred was a force to be reckoned with now that the Dutch were on the Hudson. Already, this summer, Mohawk allies of these Onondagas had received powder for furs at Fort Orange.

"Iroquois! Let the French have no rest except in death!" For over a century Iroquois orators specialized in this sentiment.

Champlain spent the winter with the Hurons on Georgian Bay. They told him about a vast water to the Northwest—Lake Superior; and they showed him buffalo hides which they had acquired in trade from Indians living near the lake. His exploring passion aroused, he determined to journey to Lake Superior in the spring. He was frustrated by a serious quarrel between the Hurons and Algonkins, which threatened to disrupt their alliance. This would have spelt ruin to the Fur Trade. All Champlain's powers of diplomacy, and his calm patience—which could ignore time and sustain itself above discord and disappointment—were required to heal the breach. By then, spring had almost passed. It was too late to make an expedition to Lake Superior. Champlain set off for home in May and

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reached the rapids forty days later. Though rumor had had him dead these many months, Pontgravé was there waiting for him.

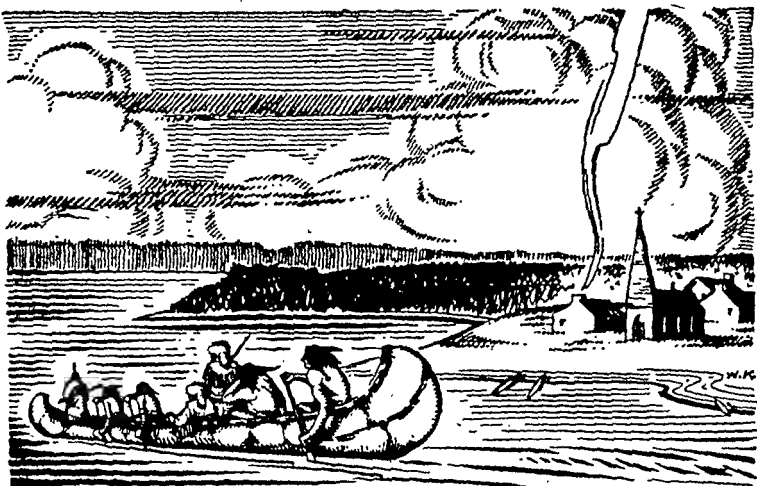
Champlain made no more journeys into the wilderness. He devoted the remaining nineteen years of his life to Quebec, in his executive capacity as Lieutenant. Other chroniclers have done him full justice as colonial founder, as official, and as explorer. Here we are considering Champlain chiefly as the founder of the Fur Trade: exhibiting, by our emphasis, that "strong bias for Chief Beaver and his clan," which Finnan Murray advocated a few pages back. His wilderness journeys were highly productive for the trade. When he returned from the last of them, he had strengthened the bond of friendship with the Algonkins, won their Huron allies and immensely increased his influence by composing their tribal differences; and, temporarily at least, he had discouraged the Iroquois from raiding the fur brigades of his Indian friends on their way to the barter grounds at the rapids. In short, he had secured the furs, which were the mainstay of New France, and he had safeguarded the route by which they must travel.

Champlain set in motion the dramatic pageant of the Fur Trade, which continues still after three centuries. It moves now mainly across the great North in the neighborhood of the Circle; for its early fair grounds and theatres have been absorbed by the city and the farm. Not man only but every fur-bearing animal on the continent has its rôle in the spectacle. Four stand out, particularly: each of them is a badge or totem for a section of the vast moving show. The first, of course, is the beaver; the second is the buffalo, typifying the Fur Trade's advance on to the

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Great Plains; the third is the sea otter; and the fourth, the Arctic fox. It was very long after Champlain's day that the western prairies opened to the trade and enormous herds rolled, with a sound like war drums, before the white hunters' racing ponies and snapping rifles. Both the passage of time, and the significance of the event when it came at last, give an epic touch to the incident of Champlain's enforced wintering on Georgian Bay in 1615, where he saw hides of an animal strange to him and heard of the Sioux. We may well take our last glimpse of him there, sitting by a Huron's fire with a buffalo robe wrapped about him and watching intently while an Indian, paint stick in hand, answers his questions by tracing a buffalo's outlines on a piece of bark or tanned hide.





CHAPTER VI

THREE RIVERS, AND WESTWARD

UNDER the Viceroy's monopoly the Fur Trade grew apace; but settlement lagged. This condition changed somewhat, not greatly, with Cardinal Richelieu's accession to power in 1627. Richelieu saw the peril of the royal possessions overseas: with no strong settlement on the seaboard, no agricultural development, scarcely any inhabitants except traders, and with not Dutch alone to the south but, closer still, a firmly grounded English settlement at Plymouth. Further south—yet not too far for danger, as Argall's raid on Acadia had proved—was Virginia, and growing like a weed. Fifteen years after the planting of Jamestown, Virginia had a population of four thousand: twenty years after the founding of Quebec there were less than a hundred persons living the year round in New

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France. Meanwhile, a number of Scotch had settled in Acadia, claiming the territory—Cabot's landfall—as British soil. In short, the English menace had crept to the coasts of New France; and the Dutch were arming the redoubtable Iroquois at her back door.

Richelieu saw that this perilous situation was due to the self interest of the men who had controlled the Fur Trade. He induced the king, Louis XIII, to rescind the monopoly. "No realm is so well situated as France to be mistress of the seas, or so rich in all things needful," he said, and proceeded to form the Company of New France, or Company of One Hundred Associates, as it was popularly called. The new organization was a colonizing and trading company of the type of the great commercial companies of England and Holland, whose activities in the New World were so successful. Each of the hundred associates contributed three thousand *livres*. Richelieu, himself, was one of the stockholders. Notables of several kinds signed their names, with his, to this challenge to the future: ministers of state, lords and their lawful ladies and their mistresses, ecclesiastics, magnates of commerce and mothers in Israel, *haut monde* and *demi monde*. Enthusiasm ran high. At last New France was to shine gloriously upon the royal shield!

The vast privileges and powers of the Company included a perpetual monopoly of the Fur Trade and of all commerce with, and within, New France and Acadia; and the exercise of all the functions of government, even the right to bestow titles of nobility. Its principal duty to the Crown was to transport not less than two hundred settlers yearly and to provide for them adequately until they should become self-supporting. The settlers must be cath-

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olics. Huguenots were now barred from New France, which had come into existence so largely through the loyalty and disinterestedness of one of their number, De Monts. Pontgravé's colored sails would be seen no more on the St. Lawrence.

In the spring of 1628, eighteen vessels left Dieppe with settlers and supplies; to meet with ill adventure on the last stretch of their course. France and England were at war, and a fleet of English privateers had already entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Each of the three English vessels was commanded by one of the five sons of Jarvis Kirke, who was a member of that Scotch company now planted in Nova Scotia, as they insisted on re-naming Acadia. The Kirkes first appeared before Quebec and demanded its surrender. Champlain refused, because he believed that the Company's vessels with men, food and ammunition would arrive any day to succor him. The Kirkes, also, knew of those vessels and they thought that their three ships would be at less risk if they engaged the French fleet on the open sea; so they hastened from Quebec in search of the foe. They met them off Gaspé Point and, after three hours of furious fighting, were masters of all the eighteen ships of the Hundred Associates with their contents. The Kirkes sailed off to England trailing their prizes behind them.

In 1629, they came back with six ships and three pinnaces. Seven of the vessels turned toward Nova Scotia, for they were bringing more Scotch farmers to Cabot's land. Young David Kirke took the other two into the St. Lawrence. His demand for the surrender of Quebec could have only one answer now. Short of powder, wanting bread, the little group of French saw him as savior rather than foe. He brought food. The cross of St. George was hoisted over

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Quebec and one hundred and fifty English went into barracks in Champlain's fort. Of the eighty-five settlers, thirty clung to the soil and were allowed to remain. The Kirkes took the others, with the missionaries and Champlain, as prisoners to England. When peace was signed between France and England, in 1632, Canada was returned to France; but her brief surrender to the English in the seventeenth century was prophetic of her end.

Since this is mainly a tale of hardy men and monarchs who profited from beaver, high born ladies seldom appear in it. So it may be well to avail ourselves of the legitimate opportunity, offered here, to regard Henrietta Maria, wife and queen to Charles I; because this fair and virtuous royal maid had an oblique influence upon the terms of the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye whereby Canada again became French soil. She was a princess of France, a daughter of white-plumed Navarre and a sister of Louis XIII. Though Henrietta reached her husband's side shortly after a marriage by proxy, her dowry still lagged behind in Louis' coffers. Charles, who was badly in need of funds—economic depression was chronic with the Stuarts—had tried vainly to raise money in Holland on the crown jewels, and Henrietta's dowry was more alluring to him than New France. Whatever the other considerations, Canada was exchanged for a girl's marriage portion.

It had fallen because it had no earth-rooted inhabitants to defend it. Richelieu had seen its weakness and its need when he sent out the settlers and supplies which were pocketed by the redoubtable Kirkes. He saw the point even more clearly afterwards. Once Canada was again his king's possession he began to prosecute his plans anew with the utmost vigor. But only for a time. He became more and

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more engrossed in affairs at home, where he had set himself the task of reducing the influence of the feudal lords and concentrating power in the hands of the monarch—and his minister. The Associates, left to themselves, became lax colonizers and ardent fur traders. Theirs was the old story over again. They lost their charter when Colbert became minister, and Louis XIV was on the throne. After thirty years of the Hundred Associates' régime, about twenty-five hundred French were resident in Canada, most of them being traders, priests and officials. Settlers would have been there in plenty if huguenots, who had a real incentive to emigrate, had not been barred. Apparently the vision of an all-catholic New France did not originate with Richelieu but with the Jesuit, Father Charles Lalemant, who had sent an envoy to state the needs of the colony, as he saw them, to the sympathetic Cardinal in 1626, and to suggest how they might be met. The great rôle played by the Jesuit Order in the development of New France, the heroism of its individual priests in the Indian domain, have been fully described by many writers, beginning with the Jesuits themselves in their voluminous *Relations*. Their imprint, seemingly indelible, is on the religious, educational and social life of French Canada to this day.

It was inevitable that they should be antagonistic to the traders. Both priests and traders were vitally concerned with the Indian, but differently. The Jesuit yearned after the Indian's soul, while the trader cared only for his pelts. The forays for beaver skins took the Indians away for long periods from the personal guidance of their priestly mentors, and they returned pagans once more. The traders and *voyageurs*, increasing every year, entered the red

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man's lodges as his brothers, and married his sisters without benefit of clergy. This did not assist the resident missionary to inculcate the principles of morality according to catholic standards. In general, Indians were strict moralists according to their own standards, but now they had to learn from the missionaries that their own standards were all wrong. The facile Norman lover, the "wintering" husband, was no help to the Jesuit in the Indian towns. The chief source of strife between the missionaries and the traders, however, was the liquor traffic. The Dutch introduced liquor into the Indian trade and the French presently adopted the vile practice on the plea of necessity. In this controversy, right sits firmly on the Jesuits' side of the table. Their warfare against the use of liquor in Indian barter was futile, but they never ceased to wage it.

The local authorities, fur traders themselves, refused spiritual counsels in commercial matters. Therefore the Jesuits appealed to those high powers of both church and state in France who were friendly to their Order. The results of their pleas and recommendations can be seen clearly in the rigid social régime which was established by Governor Montmagny, Champlain's successor. When Bishop Laval arrived, presently, as head of the church in Canada, he reinforced all the iron bars which Montmagny had forged. He desired to recognize no political nor commercial rights in conflict with the ideals of the church. As for individual rights, there were few—except in the forest. Walls had ears in Quebec, and no landed gentleman's dignity was sufficient to save him from public censure when the walls repeated some light remark, which he had made to his own wife or sons at his own table. Among his tenants and household servants there would surely be a few tale-

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bearers for holiness' sake. In what esteem secular learning was held we may deduce from the experience of one of Canada's earliest historians, Baron de la Hontan, who was hard put to save his books from destruction by priestly hands. By comparison, life in Puritan New England, during the same period, was liberal and gay.

Settlement did not increase, but the Fur Trade and geography gained immensely by this policy. Men of spirit, who might have become good husbandmen in the environs of Quebec, and who probably emigrated with that intention, were quick to put themselves beyond reach of the iron clutch of virtue. They began to flock to Three Rivers, the frontier post which Champlain had built in 1634, the year before his death. The church was also at Three Rivers, but a few hours in a canoe would take a man into the freedom of the wilderness. Once he left Three Rivers, all the host of clerics and petty officials, who comprised so large a part of New France's population, were at his back. Before him was adventure, the Unknown, shrouded in emerald leafage, which parted narrowly over a trail of bright waters.

From Three Rivers went Jean Nicolet, after Champlain, the first western explorer. He added the northern part of Lake Michigan, Green Bay and Fox river to the map; and new tribes, with their beaver, to the Fur Trade. Part of Nicolet's equipment for this trip was a flowered damask robe, to be donned as soon as he sighted China along the shore of the great water. From Three Rivers went also young Radisson and his brother-in-law, Groseilliers, to mingle with the Sioux, the Crees and Assiniboines and to dare a new farthest-north by land. And, nearly a century after, Three Rivers was the home town of the five La Vérendryes who opened the fur trail across the plains to

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the Saskatchewan, the Black Hills and the Mandan towns; and, so, first linked the far West with the Fur Trade of New France.

For a time Three Rivers was the scene of the annual market, but presently surrendered this colorful activity to Montreal. Quebec 1608: Three Rivers 1634: Montreal 1641! Thus slowly had colonists followed the traders' steps in New France; though land grants, or *seigneuries*, had been made liberally and little asked in return. The *seigneurs* were given vast acres on the understanding that they were to clear them, settle good tenants on them and forward agriculture. A few of them did so; among these was Charles Le Moyne, son of a Dieppe inn-keeper, who was to become the father of the glamorous Canadian heroes, Iberville and Bienville, the founders of Louisiana, and of Charles, first Baron de Longueuil. Many of the others were disbanded soldiers and officers who had been brought over from France to protect the colony from the Iroquois. Their *seigneuries* occupied practically the whole of the fertile Richelieu valley. Farming did not appeal to them. They made only perfunctory efforts to acquire tenants, left their acres wild, dabbled in furs, and organized bloody raids on the patient plowmen of the outlying New England settlements. The first recorded Canadian census was taken in the winter of 1666-67 and revealed a population of 3,215 souls, plus 1,200 men of the king's troops. There were a hundred priests and nuns, including thirty-five Jesuits; one hundred and forty-seven men were engaged in trades and professions—"thirty-six carpenters, thirty tailors, nine millers, three locksmiths—." The remainder of the population comprised officials, a few *seigneurs* and their tenants and the host of *coureurs-de-bois*. There were

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only three settled districts; Quebec, Three Rivers and Montreal, or Ville-Marie as it was first named. Quebec was the most populous district; yet the town itself, founded fifty-eight years before, had less than six hundred inhabitants.

The census was one of the first acts of the king's representative, the Intendant, Jean Talon, who came out in 1665 to put the colony on its feet. The day of rule by trading monopolies was past. The year before, the English had taken the Dutch colony of New Netherlands, which would continue to make history as New York. Of the other English possessions in America, Virginia was now a populous country and there were some eighty thousand souls in that too nigh New England, from which Champlain had sailed away because its Indians were corn-planters and not beaver-trappers.

Talon's ability and energy transformed the colony. He offered practical aid to settlers, increased the land grants, disbanded more troops, put them to tilling fields, and imported virtuous maids from France to be their wives. In his report, sent home in the third year of his rule, he draws His Majesty's attention, complacently, to the item regarding baptisms—"the number of children this year is six or seven hundred!" Indeed so numerous and prolific have the fair immigrants been that Talon declares a moratorium on prospective brides for one year.

I consider it unnecessary to send girls next year; the better to give the inhabitants a chance to marry their own daughters to soldiers desirous of settling. Neither will it be necessary to send young ladies, as we received last year fifteen instead of the four who were needed for wives of officers and notables.

Talon pitted these maidens, who were carefully selected

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by nuns and parish priests in France, against the lure of the woods. He would retrieve the *coureur-de-bois* by marriage and offspring. He ruled that no man, who remained a bachelor for more than fifteen days after the arrival of a bride ship, could go into the woods, or hunt with the Indians. No wife, no outing! Undoubtedly this policy held a number of men to the soil who had meant to wander. But many others evaded marriage, or married if that were simpler, and still took to the woods. At this time, or a few years later, the number of men who had forsaken the settlements for the forest was said to be hardly less than a thousand.

The church worked hand in hand with the secular authorities to stem the tide toward "paganism." Not only was the trader, who used brandy in barter, severely punished by the state, he was excommunicated by the Bishop—to small purpose; for the brandy trade continued and, presently, won the Intendant's sanction. Talon could not afford to lose the furs which were still, as in Champlain's day, the only profit in New France. But, if the church could not stop the brandy trade, it could and did keep its tenants. The ecclesiastical *seigneuries* totaled a quarter of the granted lands; the Jesuits alone owned a million and a half acres. The tenants on these lands were not only under the control of the priests in devotional matters, but also at their daily labors. And, thus doubly spurred and doubly awed, they worked well; there were no better farms in Canada than those which the church owned. Here, too, some hearts might quicken at the distant roll of the tom-tom; but, under the governance of landlords and confessors, all feet kept the furrow. It was understood that he must plow earth today who would gain heaven hereafter! More than

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any other agency, the church, and particularly the J suits, directed the spirit and shaped the structure of *habitant* life in Quebec. As we have seen, the Jesuits, through their Indian missions, spread their influence far beyond the confines of white settlement. However much they deplored those Normans with pagan tastes, who corroded Christian doctrine and morality in the tents of Sh m, they did great service to the Fur Trade. Their presence in the towns of the Algonkins, Hurons and, later, other nations, kept these tribes in amity with the French, who depended on their furs. English and Dutch traders must bid for their friendship in vain. On no account would the "black robes," as the Indians called them, allow their native pupils to risk contamination by affability to heretics. They understood the importance of the Fur Trade to Canada, and they desired the colony's success. Their explorations also aided the traders.

Talon — and after him, Frontenac — could not have pushed Canada forward with such strides if there had not been a goodly measure of support in France. Louis XIV took a keen interest in his North American subjects. The minister, Colbert, seconded most of Talon's pleas. But he failed the Intendant in one matter, which was vital. When, in 1664, the Dutch colony on the Hudson fell to the English, Talon besought Colbert to induce Holland to demand its return; as a condition of peace, with the secret agreement between France and Holland that New Netherland would then be handed over to France. Colbert rejected the idea, seeing in it only more responsibility and expense for France. So the English came to the Hudson to stay; and to make friends with the Five Nations.



CHAPTER VII

“TENAGA! OUCH’KA!”

AT THAT period men had only the vaguest notions of American geography. In general, the belief in a narrow continent, with a sea or river leading to China, still prevailed. Nicolet, the fur trader, primarily seeking new wealth in peltry, had worn his mandarin coat in good faith. Though one missionary chronicler remarked, sarcastically, that the explorers went out to discover a “sea of beaver,” there was probably no western trail-blazer who did not hope to bring back samples of the gold and spices of Cathay in his beaver pouch. The chronicler might justly have added that, without the Fur Trade to sustain leader and men, no ardent geographer could go out to look for a western route to China. New France had no funds with which to finance exploring expeditions..

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With their misconceptions of the extent of the continent, and their complete ignorance of the rivers and their courses, the Canadians could not foresee that the expansion of French power and trade would go, not westward, but southward. So that they were unaware of the true significance of the powerful Iroquois Confederacy in its key position south of Lake Ontario. The Iroquois were hardly farther from the Ohio river, which was still unseen of the French, than they were from Montreal, on which they rushed repeatedly with torch and tomahawk. The Canadians knew them as fierce and courageous warriors, as enemies of their own Indian allies and friends of their trading rivals, the Dutch and the English. In short, they looked upon the Five Nations as a bad obstacle in the path of French trade; which might, nevertheless, be brought low by punitive expeditions and by treaties. They judged them by the Algonkin tribes, merely conceding that they were better fighters. But the Iroquois were far in advance of the Indians of New France, physically, intellectually and culturally. They had progressed from a social system, ruled by customs and taboos, to a government by law. Their religious and social ideal was peace among Iroquois. They had founded their union on that ideal and ramified it by laws; and, so well had they wrought, that it endured for two hundred years.

Inspired by the *Relations* of the Jesuits, writing not without a slight, pardonable prejudice against the nation which obliterated their converts, martyred some of their brothers and rejected their creed, historians have overstressed the cruelty and tortures which were a part of the Iroquois method of warfare. Champlain shows his Algonkin allies to have been quite as fiendish. This side of Iro-

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quois character is no more than mentioned here, and is only mentioned to leave no grounds for a charge of bias, of undue emphasis upon their idealism. The Iroquois, like other red nations, were primitives and pagans; they were not the product of centuries of Christian civilization as, by contrast, was the case with the spiritual instigators of the Spanish Inquisition and of the Salem witch hunt and, in our own times, the highly cultured inventors and users of poison gas. Among the more advanced Indian nations certainly, perhaps among all, personal liberties were important; there was genuine respect for the right of opinion. The red man was not a bigot. On the contrary, individual religious experience was encouraged; for who knew by what personal agency the Above-All-High might speak the word of truth and wisdom to guide many? Women were respected and protected; but were not accorded the same rights in all tribes. Their position was highest among the Five Nations. An Iroquois man could have only one wife. Iroquois women were members of the council and their votes elected the president of the council. Their peculiar risks in war were recognized; they exercised a power in war councils which amounted practically to the veto.

When the palefaces arrived with their gunpowder, alcohol and greed for furs, the Five Nations were like a family of brothers living harmoniously together and planning to spread their ideal, first among other tribes of Iroquois stock, and then throughout the Indian world. The complete abolition of war, the establishment of peace on earth, no less, was the aim of the Great League of the Iroquois; which had come into being, chiefly through the genius of Hiawatha, early in the sixteenth century. For this boon, and for the constant holy purpose to attain it, the breth-

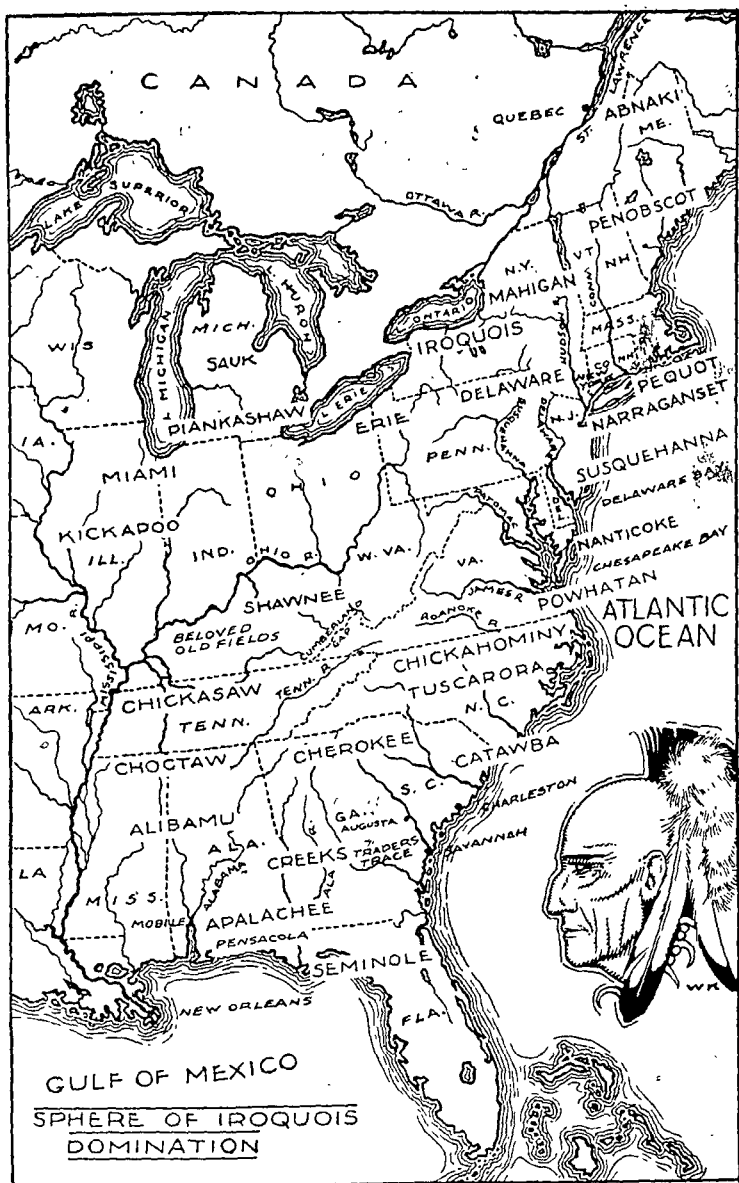
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ren in the Long Houses prayed to the Great Spirit in the noble rituals of their creed.

Love us with all power,
Beyond all treasures,
Or spreading of words through the air.
All men travelling under great heaven
You have invited, your grandchildren (Iroquois)
and all other nations . . .
You the All-Maker,
Above-All-High,
Best Friend of people,
We ask you to help us!

Five of the major Iroquois nations had begun to make substance of Hiawatha's vision, when the Europeans came to the St. Lawrence and Hudson valleys. There were a number of other Iroquois tribes, however, who were not yet in the League. The most important of these were the Hurons to the north, and the Cherokees in the valley and mountains of Tennessee and in the mountains of North Carolina. The Hurons were an inferior people; the Cherokees, on the contrary, were numerous, powerful, intelligent and progressive, but they were a long way off. We do not know surely what caused the enmity between the Five Nations and the Hurons: possibly the failure of the Hurons to join the Great League and their alliance with the Algonkins. The two peoples were already foes before Champlain fanned Iroquois angers into a conflagration. In order to understand events to come, it is necessary to look a little more closely at the life of the Indians in the eastern forests as it was when the forests and the game and fur animals were theirs.

Before French and Dutch brought the Fur Trade into



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his villages to upset tribal routine, ideals and economics, the red man lived mainly by hunting and he hunted only to live. He was the first conservationist, the first American game protector. He killed only from necessity and he utilized practically every part of the slain animals. He wasted nothing. He used caribou and buffalo hides for tents, bags, robes, shoes, ropes and so on; furs for warmth and for decoration; bones for arrow points, needles, whistles, for singing fringes on his smartest garments, and in several other ways; he found uses even for the claws and feathers of birds, the skins of fishes, and the hoofs of beasts. There was trade among friendly tribes, to be sure, but it was an exchange of necessities. The Fur Trade set the Indians to killing animals on a grand scale. As the woodland massacre for pelts proceeded, the intelligent Iroquois saw that the tribes with the largest trapping areas would live longest, and that the people with restricted fur grounds would presently not live at all. And they knew that their own fur grounds were small.

The towns of the Five Nations were excellently situated, for a people devoted to their social and political ideals. Their chosen territory provided furs enough for their own use and, during a few years, enough beaver and mink for the Dutch, too. But the Dutch demanded so many skins for their powder and alcohol that, after thirty years of supplying their demand, the fur grounds of the Five Nations were almost trapped out. The Hurons' fur area was much larger; and, to the west, there were the Eries and minor peoples, with many beaver skins, which they could still send to the French by way of Lake Huron should the Iroquois make the route by Lake Ontario too dangerous. The Five Nations faced the new problem, which the white

"TENAGA! OUCH'KA!"

man and the Fur Trade had thrust upon them, and they acted with their accustomed energy. First, in 1648, they fell upon the Hurons, destroyed their towns, killed the Jesuit missionaries, and slaughtered most of the people. They took seven hundred captives home with them and adopted them, to replace the losses in their own man power occasioned by the white man's weapons in a war for the white man's trade. Of the remnant of the Hurons, who had escaped, some took refuge near Quebec where their few hundred descendants live today, at Lorette: the others fled west, to reappear in history as the Wyandots, a corruption of the tribal name, Ouendats. "Huron" is not an Indian word. Father Charles Lalemant says that the Hurons' peculiar fashion of hair-dressing inspired a French sailor to name them "hures," meaning "boar-heads"; *huron*, however, was a term applied to peasants in France as early as the fourteenth century. News of the massacre was carried to Montreal by three or four Huron fugitives. At that time, or a little later, a local bard added yet another lay to the repertory of Quebec folksongs. *Habitants* today, in the field or at the loom, chant the sad story of the old Huron refugee, "streaked all over with black paint," who came in fear and sorrow. The mournful tune is broken, now and again, by a wild shriek imitative of the Iroquois war cry:

"*Ouch'ka! Tenaouich'tenaga Ouch'ka!*"

No furs reached Quebec that year, and very few the next year—a whole nation of trappers had been wiped out! The Algonkins huddled in their houses in fear. Only the Indians near Quebec brought furs for trade, and these were not enough to sustain the settlement. The Iroquois, having struck their blow at the economic life of the fur-

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trading colony, undertook the annihilation of New France. With a boldness and swiftness no other eastern tribes ever matched, they beset Montreal again and again; they attacked Three Rivers; they closed the fur routes. New France petitioned the king for troops. Thirteen hundred soldiers were shipped from France to subdue the savages. The soldiers made two expeditions into the territory of the Five Nations and destroyed the nearest towns; the Mohawks'. But they slew no Indians; for the Mohawks, warned by scouts, had taken to the woods. The Iroquois could not afford armed invasion of their own strongholds. They made peace; and accepted missionaries. In their own minds, the treaty with the French, and the discussions of the new religion, were temporary expedients. They wanted to be free, for a time, to pursue the plans of the League and to secure for themselves a large western fur area. They subdued the Eries and secondary tribes on Lake Erie; they sent emissaries among all the Iroquois peoples; and, at the close of eighteen years of peace with the French, they had established their authority over tribes in New England, Ohio and Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Maryland and North Carolina. Then they renewed their raids on the French settlements.

Obviously, the Iroquois could not remove New France from the map of America. It was held by a race as brave and resolute as themselves, and with resources for defensive and aggressive warfare of which savages had no inkling. New France expanded in spite of the Five Nations; but they hampered its march, not only in the early years along the St. Lawrence but, during the next half century, along the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers, where their vassals followed their policy of friendship with the English.

“TENAGA! OUCH’KA!”

Because little was recorded of the Indian, in relation to his own problems, irrespective of white men’s matters—and nothing understood of his inner spiritual being as devout worshipper and poet—his influence on the destiny of those, who served kings and built cabins in his domain, has been but little considered by historians. Yet it was an influence both vast and subtle. The Algonkins of Canada were the first tribes to remold white men; they made over the Norman fishermen into *coureurs-de-bois* and bound them by women’s love and by children in whose veins two bloods mingled. The Iroquois, raining blows upon the Montreal frontier, stopped the movement of French settlement up the St. Lawrence completely for a time. In extirpating the Hurons, they dealt the French trade in beaver a blow which it, and the colony, barely survived. By their alliance with the English, and the extension of their League, they crossed not only the commercial, but the imperial, designs of France. On the day when Champlain amazed and terrified them by the first noisy discharge of powder in their faces, they were chiefly an agricultural people with a high ideal before them, which had drawn them out of the cruder savagery of surrounding nations to the most advanced state of political government to be found north of Mexico. The French introduced the Fur Trade which changed the whole course of life for the Five Nations and ended forever the long cherished dream of the Great League: peace among Iroquois, peace to the Indian world. This cost the French a price; and they paid installments of it in Canada, in Pennsylvania and Ohio, along the Father of Waters; they were paying something, however indirectly, to the Iroquois on the day when Canada fell to the English.

Peace among Iroquois! The Five Nations achieved it

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and, in place of the Great League—the noble ideal, never to be fulfilled because the white man had come—they welded an economic bond with some fifteen tribes, which insured them a commanding position in the Fur Trade. The intelligence and energy of the Five Nations, and their talent for organization and leadership, are clearly manifested in the way they met the new conditions; which had arisen so suddenly and so strangely, and had made an end of the tribal aims so long pursued. They adapted the old plan of confederation to the new need, which was economic, and thereby saved themselves. They survived and were powerful; though the Great League was a lost vision, its bright beckoning hidden forever in darkness.

Now the sky is empty
Of all sun-and-star shine;
Lo, the darkening night
Stalks through the shadow-land;
"No light to beckon us,"
Murmurs the waterfall,
Sings the river-voice!





CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT COMPANY

WHILE Talon was putting his best foot forward in New France, forcing the Iroquois to make peace and urging the King's minister, Colbert, to acquire the Dutch colony on the Hudson river, events were moving toward the establishment of a fur trading rival in the north. Oddly enough, two Frenchmen were responsible. They were Pierre Esprit Radisson and his brother-in-law, Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, who went out from that cradle of titans, Three Rivers, to great exploits. As we have noted before, they were the first explorers to meet the Sioux—properly, the Dakotas—of the Great Plains, and the Crees, who are still the largest Indian nation; and to journey overland to a point on the trail to Henry Hudson's Bay. The bay was English water, but England had more or less forgotten it.

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They returned to Three Rivers in 1663 with a rich harvest of furs and plans for building posts at the mouths of the rivers flowing into the bay. They pointed out the advantages of trading within the Indians' own territory. From forts on the bay the furs would go by sail to France, thus escaping the Iroquois menace and eliminating the heavy expenses of the long journey by canoe and portage. The Governor of Three Rivers turned a deaf ear to their sage advice and, on a specious plea of insubordination and like whatnots of red tape, confiscated their furs, which were worth about three hundred thousand dollars in our money. During the next three years Radisson and Groseilliers sought justice, and also backing for their great idea, in the colony and in France, and received nothing of either.

Mishaps on land and sea and a chance meeting with Sir George Carteret, Vice Chamberlain of Charles II's household and one of the original Proprietors of Carolina, blended dramatically with other causes whereby they found themselves, presently, on the coast of England. These two aliens, who had just snatched their lives miraculously from wrecking seas and Dutch naval guns, can hardly have been much cheered by their first sight of London. Miles of blackened waste stretched before their eyes; and the spirit of gloom shrouded the great city recently devastated by plague and fire. Over sixty-eight thousand lives, out of a population of four hundred and sixty thousand, had been yielded to the plague. The fire had consumed thirteen thousand houses and ninety churches, after bursting from its humble starting point in a baker's oven in Pudding Lane near Fish Street. From Tower to Temple, London was a charred flat. The Custom House was ashes, the Exchange reduced to one statue that the flames

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overleaped: all the old guild halls were erased, except the Hall of the Ironmongers; and many a merry inn and coffee house, too. As if this were not calamitous enough, merchants, who had had the roofs of their counting houses burned over their heads, had also suffered heavy losses at sea, by reason of the Dutch War.

They were in the right mood to listen attentively to the French refugees' plan for trading posts on Hudson Bay, from which English bottoms could sail laden to the rails with beaver.

They thought of hats: of the Puritan's plain beaver hat, wide of brim, the crown a foot tall; of the new cavalier hat, given its form and its vogue by the King himself and, therefore, sported by every lord and gentleman, as well as by many who were none but who believed that a plumed beaver hat, perched at the royal angle, gave them at least the look of quality. The cavalier hat was low of crown, unfortunately—the King being over six feet tall—but it made up for that by the handsome costliness of its broad brim. Beaver for hats alone meant a fortune to both fur dealers and hatters; not to mention living wages for felters and many other minor fellows who had seen their jobs burn up with London. The merchants invited Radisson and Groseilliers to outline their plans and to repeat the wonder tales of their explorations to this and that man of influence. Prince Rupert, the King's cousin, may have met them at coffee between his lusty bouts with the Dutch; John Portman, goldsmith, doubtless did. These meetings were held at table in some coffee house, probably the old Temple Exchange; it was there, a few yards from its hospitable door, that the fire had been halted at last. The food and drink were such as to loosen tighter tongues than

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the two Frenchmen's. Roasted pullets, "barons of beef, juggets of mutton, washed down with ale seven years in the cask": this was proper fare for men of standing in those days, with whom dining was not only a necessity but a passion and a virtue. These dinners must have seemed agreeably ample to the explorers, who had known starving days when they were short of powder or, creeping through hostile Indian country, dared not fire their guns.

"Another slice of beef, Mr. Radizun?" The loyal English tongues of London merchants did well enough with that name; though, as the records reveal, they took no risks with "Sieur des Groseilliers" but promptly translated it.

"Let me tempt you with another pullet, Mr. Gooseberry."

"A monopoly, Mr. Portman. Right, Sir. If His Majesty will grant a charter. Who should go to Oxford to see the King on this matter?"

His Majesty, the merry monarch Charles II, was said to be not at all merry at Oxford, whither he had fled from plague and fire. In fact, rumor had it that Charles was bored. Now, it was well known, in educated circles at least, that no man in England enjoyed a good story more than Charles Stuart, and also that few could tell one better. The King's stories and witty sayings made mirth for many. But, in the royal repertoire, there were no tales of savage peoples with fantastic customs; or of vast wildernesses, which could look to a man like the world disintegrating into its final dust, under the pounding hoofs of a million caribou. The merchants may have reasoned in some such way as this: if sober tradesfolk, though hard hit in their purses, willingly give pullets and ale, at a price, in ex-

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change for the lively tales of Messrs. Radizun and Gooseberry, might not His Majesty (Whom God protect!) grant a charter for them—and the more readily, since it would cost him naught but the labor of signing it?

There were reasons for this hope. In the half dozen years of his sovereignty Charles had granted charters in reward of both services and entertainment. A group of Royalists, staunch friends of his when he was in exile, were now proprietary lords of two American plantations, named respectively Carolina and New Jersey. A body of scholars, men of new and intriguing theories, experimenters in physics and so forth, had received a charter from him and leave to call themselves "The Royal Society." Their discussions piqued the curiosity of the King, who was, himself, a good chemist and so fascinated with the study of naval design that he spoke of himself as a "ship-builder." Charles' facile imagination must have been pleasantly stirred by Bishop Wilkins' notion of a boat which could sail under ice to the north pole. Possibly some of the designs he made for his own amusement were of that boat. It was in the bishop's house that the small group of scholars, later The Royal Society, held their first meetings. The England, into which the French explorers had entered through the blackened waste of its capital, was the England of modern thought. The Commonwealth had widened horizons and lifted higher and clearer heavens for men's minds. Now into the new empyrean came the eagle, science, to challenge old theologies; and to battle with older credulity and, inevitably, to feed it new fantasies. It was the England of Hobbes, Locke and Algernon Sydney, whose political theories were to influence colonial America and the independent nation, which would spring from it.

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Newton, in this year, had discovered the law of gravitation, though he would not publish his "Principia" till nine years later. As to letters, Bunyan, in prison, was writing his "Pilgrim's Progress"; the blind Milton was now dictating "Paradise Lost" to his peevish daughters; it would be published in 1667; next year; in secret, meticulous Samuel Pepys, recording all that he saw and heard, fashioned the literary monument to his times. In art, there was Charles' friend and court painter, Peter Lely, immortalizing the beauty of the King's mistresses—he could do nothing for the Queen, poor thing! Christopher Wren was busy rebuilding London, with his original designs for government towers and church spires and for the commercial headquarters of the guilds; such as the small, gay hall of the Vintners and the larger, severely plain hall of the Haberdashers (Puritans to a man).

The magnetic center of this young modern England was the King himself. Milton and Bunyan, to be sure, were hardly bedtime reading for Charles, who preferred their indiscreet contemporary, Wycherly, above all other authors; but the sciences, commerce, painting, architecture on land and sea, and the men who pursued these interests, all attracted him to a degree. Except for instruction in mathematics from the great Hobbes, Charles was poorly educated; but he was far from being the unintelligent person pictured by some writers. On the contrary, he was an indolent, sensual, cynical and conscienceless man, who was naturally dowered with intellect and talents. He held perhaps only two aims continuously in mind: to make sure of sufficient money for his costly indulgences and to cater to his subjects just enough to make them willing to keep him on the throne, from which they had pushed his father

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to the block. As a king without a crown, during the Commonwealth, he had suffered the humiliations of a political guest abroad with a lean purse; and he had no wish, as he phrased it, "to set out again on his travels." "A lazy prince," and "the king do mind nothing but pleasures," Pepys scribbled. A lazy, pleasure-loving prince, but the first king of modern England; out of his own native curiosity, or his need for amusement, encouraging the little beginnings of great things.

To Charles, then, some time shortly after their landing, Sir George Carteret brought Radisson and Groseilliers, with their tales and their plan for fur posts on Hudson Bay and a vast new commerce for England. The establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company north of New France was to have no small influence on the destiny of Canada; and, in this connection, it is interesting to note the coincidence of the date, when the two castaways met Charles II, with the date of the treacherous treaty, which the Iroquois made with New France in order to clear French interference from their path while they extended their sway. Both occurred in 1666.

Charles was delighted with Radisson and Groseilliers. They livened up Oxford for him. He enjoyed their stories so heartily that he kept them by him and paid them forty shillings per week for the rest of the year; which was a right noble fee for a couple of royal entertainers in those days. Court jesters often received nothing but their keep! Any evening during the King's sojourn away from the dismal ashes of the playhouses he had loved, shouts of laughter and wilder blood-chilling sounds would greet the summoned guest, or official, in the corridor leading to the royal salon: Wren bringing his drawings for the new Custom

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House; Lely with one of his many canvases of the impeccably beautiful Barbara Palmer; or the King's treasurer, speeding from town on the royal order for more guineas.

Since Lely has left no painted record of the Oxford Thousand and One Nights, when two male Shirazads from the American wilderness entertained the King, we may compose a picture for ourselves. There is brilliance in it; rich satins and velvets, and jewels radiating under the lights. The group includes the handsome and dissolute Buckingham, "royal tutor in the vices," whose hands are not clean of murder; and Sedley whose foul wit, on one occasion, so outraged the refined sense of the porters in the theatre that they pelted him with eggs at his own play. But in contrast to these, look at George Monck, Duke of Albemarle, loved of both Cromwell and Charles for the bold honest loyalty in him which serves his country always, no matter who rules it. For all his half dozen years of ducal state, he is still the bluff soldier, as plain as any man in camp, yet appreciating a well-laundered shirt: as witness his lumpish, dowdy, red-knuckled Duchess, with ill-turned wig and strawberry leaves askew, who won his heart and a marriage contract by her skill with starch and flat iron. And ladies? The beauty of the King's realm is well represented; but Barbara Palmer, Lady Castlemaine—to become Duchess of Cleveland anon, as mother of a quartette of demi-royal children—outshines them all. Her jewels cost England two hundred thousand dollars, which is money even in our day. Her hold on Charles is said to be even less her beauty than her violent temper, which he enjoys provoking. How delighted Pepys is to be near her in the theatre, how proud if her cloak brushes him in passing! "A woman of great beauty, but most enormously

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vicious and ravenous . . . ever uneasy to the king, and always carrying on intrigues with other men" is a bishop's pen picture of Barbara. Like the King she is a devotee of the theatre; and, at present she is enamoured of Charles Hart, London's matinée idol. So much so, indeed, that she has even taken his new leading lady under her patronage. She promises to bespeak the King's favor for Hart, and for the girl, whom he has lifted from the lowly occupation of a hawker of Seville oranges in Drury Lane, to playing comedy rôles at his side. Amiable Charles, ever ready to do a favor that costs him no effort, will turn the royal glance upon Nell Gwyn; and Milady Castelmaine will presently regret her benevolence.

Besides his brother, James, Duke of York, two men hold the King's affections through all weathers: his cousin, Rupert of Bavaria, and Admiral Penn—"Old Penn," Charles calls him, familiarly. Old Penn has a bit of money and brings some of it with him when he comes to court. Charles is fond of games of chance; and to have loyal Old Penn's purse to dip into is nothing less than a convenience. "Lucky at cards, unlucky in love!" Charles' luck is all in love. What is Old Penn's motive for these loans to one who never pays? Like his sovereign's tastes for stories and gambling, it is to have a more or less direct bearing on the beaver trade.

Old Penn has a very handsome son named William, his heir and his pride. It is his greatest ambition, his most ardent desire in life, to see William permanently placed among the curled and silken puppets who loll in the King's chamber! With this end in view, when the war broke out, he took William with him aboard the Duke of York's flagship, to get a whiff of brine and Dutch gunpowder under

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the eyes of the Duke; this was a dramatic way to bring him to James' attention. Then he sent William home, and out of harm's way, by appointing him bearer of the first dispatches to the King; which was an excellent way of bringing him vividly to Charles' attention. Young William arrived at the palace in the middle of the night, and Charles received him at once, in his nightgown, and said affably: "How's your father?" An honored and a proud man is Old Penn! though, just now, he is a trifle put about by William's leanings toward certain uncouth fads, current at the moment. Advised by Mr. Pepys, his co-worker in the Admiralty, he has bundled the boy off to France to sample frivolity where the brand is said to be best. (Pepys secretly puts down his opinion of sycophantic Old Penn—"a mean fellow"—and notes that young Mr. Penn has become a "Quaker or some other very melancholy thing.")

Prince Rupert is older than his cousins, Charles and James. He was a brilliant cavalry leader on the side of Charles I in the civil war, and gave Oliver a hard tussle at Naseby. He is a talented artist in mezzotint. His "Head of John the Baptist" will be esteemed by connoisseurs of later generations. He amuses himself, as is the fashion, with scientific hobbies and is already the inventor of "Prince's metal," a modified brass. In his old age he will give to lovers of tiny toys and bright knickknacks those small glass dolls, beasts, fishes and so forth, which are still popular in our own time, though their original name, "Rupert's Drops," is seldom heard. James, Duke of York, heir to the throne, is there, too. He lacks the surface sweetness, the easy affability and the magnetism of Charles, and his reckless, dashing courage. A dour, suspicious man, distrusted and disliked; always imagining that he has dis-

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covered plots against the King's life, forever warning Charles! Perhaps his twisted mind, working incessantly in its narrow dark cage, interprets the strange appearance of Radisson and Groseilliers at Oxford as a subtle move in another plot of would-be regicides. If he whispers his common warning in the King's ear now, Charles, knowing his brother to be the best detested man in all his realm, will make his usual laughing answer.

"James, they'll never kill me to make you King!"

The center of attraction, of course, is His Majesty, himself, the admired of all admirers. Let his portrait be sketched for us by a Frenchwoman, whose Gallic realism could shield her heart apparently while in no way interfering with the pleasure of her eyes. Charles, she says, is "well-made with a swarthy complexion agreeing well with his fine black eyes; a large ugly mouth, a graceful and dignified carriage and a fine figure." He strokes the glossy ears of his spaniel, praises a tale, or laughs uproariously at the warwhoop.

C'était un vieux sauvage
Tout noir, tout barbouilla, ouich'ka!
Avec sa vieill' couverte
Et son sac à tabac. Ouich'ka!
Ah! Ah! tēnaouich' tenaga,
Tēnaouich' tenaga, ouich'ka!

What is the tale tonight? Of Radisson's capture by the Iroquois when he was a lad, and his brief years as the adopted son of the old woman who rushed at his torturers and wrested him away from them? Of the trick by which he walked a company of French captives out of an Iroquois camp? Of some of the hardships and perils and the natural wonders on the long trail he made with a few

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Algonkins through the country of the Assiniboines, or Hot Stones—so-named, Your Majesty, by the Algonkins because of these Indians' novel culinary art of boiling food by dropping hot stones into the water—and on through the land of the Winnipegs, later called Crees? The Odyssey of Radisson and Groseilliers has enough dramatic incidents to be well worth the forty shillings per week which a bored monarch pays for them, while he waits for merry nights at the play in London again.

So the King learned the meaning of Assiniboine, laughed at the warwhoop and watched the two entertainers doing whatever two men could to demonstrate the principles of an Iroquois game—called, in French, Lacrosse—with the curiously shaped racquets which they had made. Meanwhile English business men were seeking for the wherewithal to equip two vessels for a voyage to Henry Hudson's Bay. It was only the part of caution to see if Mr. Radizun and Mr. Gooseberry were true men, and not French deceivers, before a company should be formed and a charter requested. The wherewithal was not easy to come by in a city, which had recently seen four hundred of its streets vanish in smoke, with the money that was on them, and was being called on for funds to re-build. It was 1668 before two small vessels, the *Eaglet* and the *Nonsuch*, sailed from Gravesend. The funds had been provided by Prince Rupert, the Duke of Albemarle, the Earls of Arlington, Shaftesbury and Craven, John Portman, the goldsmith, and various other interested persons. Prince Rupert inspected the ships and drank to the success of the venture in the captains' cabins. Radisson sailed on the *Eaglet* and Groseilliers on the *Nonsuch*. The *Eaglet's* master, a timid fellow, made the voyage across the ocean but feared to en-

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ter Hudson Strait of evil fame. Despite Radisson's pleas, he turned round and sailed home! The *Nonsuch* plodded on into the bay. Groseilliers set out for the Indian camps to bid for furs, then returned to the ship. It was a depressing winter for the crew, with little protection against the cold, and seeing on all sides "Nature looking like a carcase frozen to death." When summer came, the *Nonsuch* sailed out of the bay, loaded to the waterline with beaver.

On May 2nd, 1670, Charles granted a Royal Charter to the "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay." The Governor was "Our Deare and entirely Beloved Cousin, Prince Rupert"; and the vast unknown domain handed over to him and his companions was named Rupert's Land. The charter defines the objects of the Company as "Discovery of a new Passage into the South Sea, and for the finding some Trade for Furrs, Mineralls, and other considerable Commodities . . . by meanes whereof there may probably arise very great advantage to us and our Kingdome": and it grants "unto them and their successors the sole Trade and Commerce of all those Seas, Streights, Bayes, Rivers, Lakes, Creekes and Soundes, in whatever Latitude they shall bee, that lye within the Streights commonly called Hudsons Streights, together with all the Landes, Countreyes and Territoryes upon the Coasts and Confynes . . . which are not now actually possessed by any of our Subjectes, or by the Subjectes of any other Christian Prince or State . . . with the Fishings of all Sortes of Fish, Whales, Sturgions and other Royall Fishes . . . and all Mynes Royall, as well discovered as not discovered, of Gold, Silver, Gemms and pretious Stones . . . Wee create and constitute the said Governør and Company, for the tyme being, and their

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successors, the true and absolute Lordes and Proprietors of the same Territory, lymittes and places aforesaid."

In his digest of the clauses regarding the Company's responsibilities to the Crown, Sir William Schooling, K.B.E., author of the brief monograph issued by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1920 to commemorate its two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary, says: "Powers were given to the Company to make laws, impose penalties and punishments, and to judge in all causes civil and criminal according to the laws of England. They may employ armed force, appoint commanders and erect forts. Finally, all admirals, and others of his Majesty's officers and subjects, are to aid and assist in the execution of the powers granted by the Charter." This document, written by hand on skin parchment, is preserved in the Board Room in Hudson's Bay House in Bishopsgate, London. It is in five large sheets comprising some twenty-seven square feet of writing; and the first page has an elaborate border of scroll-work, coats-of-arms and other elegancies, throwing into strong relief the handsome mocking countenance of the Second Charles.

The Charter assured, the Company's vessels sailed again for Hudson Bay. Before their return, the King had received a compliment from Carolina, and painful news from nearer home. In this same year, 1670, the colonists on the Carolina plantation founded a town and named it, in his honor, Charles Town. So in the year which opened the vast North to the Fur Trade, and made Englishmen fur traders, there rose also the walls of Charleston, which would become the *dépôt* of an immense English trade with the tribes along the Mississippi, from Georgia and Alabama to the Kentucky border. The painful news was the

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death of liberal Old Penn, in September 1670. The Admiral, on his death bed, had called back the Quaker son, whom he had driven out of doors, and had sent a message to the Duke of York pleading that William be taken care of and protected from persecution for his faith. Charles still owed Old Penn all those gambling loans: they amounted to sixteen thousand pounds. [When the debt was mentioned by persons who knew of it, it was the proper thing to say that Charles had borrowed the money for the Navy; possibly some of it was so spent.] James promised that he would protect the young Quaker, and also keep him in the King's mind. Thus indirectly, Old Penn, dying, exerted an influence upon the Fur Trade and had a small share in the spreading of British imperial power, and British settlers' cabins, in America. For what Charleston was, later, to the Mississippi trade, such was Philadelphia to the Fur Trade of the old Ohio Territory. In time English traders from both towns would be swarming through a vast Indian country—which might have been wholly won by the French long since, but for the Iroquois. Events of the year 1670, which seemed unrelated then, conspired to sandwich the fur-trading colony of New France—which must turn southward to the Ohio and Mississippi countries for furs—between the English fur-trading colonies of Carolina and Pennsylvania—which must look to those same Ohio and Mississippi territories for furs—and the immense fur country of Rupert's Land.

The record of the first decade of the new English commerce in furs, which intervened between the signing of the Hudson's Bay Company's charter and the payment of the King's debt to Old Penn's son, belongs to another chapter.

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Charles paid the debt in 1681, eleven years after the Admiral's death. There is a tale—so true to Charles' character that no excuse need be offered for believing it—that William came to the palace to thank the King for his charter, and to take leave of him. The King, we learn by the words of the tale, is sauntering in his garden, tossing crumbs to the swans, sniffing at the roses. ("He delights in a bewitching kind of pleasure called sauntering," a courtier writes.) To him enters tall, handsome, grave-faced William, wearing his tall, ample-brimmed, plain beaver hat, which he does not remove. It is false to the Quaker concept of the equality of all men before God to uncover to kings, or to employ titles of pride in addressing man who is but dust. Modestly and very earnestly, William protests the perpetuation of his name in that of his American plantation, as the King has had it written down in the charter. He would call it merely "Sylvania." The cynical gleam in the King's black eyes sharpens, his mephistophelian eyebrows lift. *His name?* What an odd mistake! No, no! It is the Admiral, loyal, open-handed Old Penn, the unofficial royal treasurer, whose virtues are to be immortalized in the name of the Quaker colony. Such is the King's will and nothing can change it! Then with a glance, which seems to say that he is suddenly aware of William's towering hat, he sweeps off his own and stands so, bareheaded, the plumed beaver dangling at his hip. William Penn gives him back a calm steady look for his mocking one. He feels neither awe nor fear of monarchs: he has preached the word in their realms in Europe, where they would have burned him if they had caught him; he has faced this one before in the royal palace, even in the royal nightgown; and he has helped some twelve thousand other Quakers to crowd

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the royal gaols until, as was said, England had no fit place left to house her rakes and ruffians save to send them to court to be the King's gentlemen.

"Why does thee remove thy hat, Friend Charles?" he asks, mildly.

"Because, Friend William, wherever I am, it is customary for only one person to remain covered."

Charles turns away by one or other of the flowery paths. Most likely this one ends at the open door of the erstwhile queen of comedy, mother of the ten-year-old Baron Hedlington, later to be Duke of St. Albans. There Charles will find laughter; and a true and loyal affection, lacking in other bowers. It is possible that his steps turn toward her more often latterly, as Nature begins to threaten him with the final toll for the years of his excesses. We know that the last words he ever spoke were of her, though another mistress leaned weeping on his pillow.

That staid Quaker gentleman with his fantastical folderols about human rights—and his unflinching hat! Though the encounter with Friend William has rather put him off, it is almost certain that he laughs once, to think that he, the most notorious deadbeat in history, has actually paid a debt of honor. Woe to them that think a precedent has been established! The dark flecks in the smiling rays of his humor will vanish presently. "Pretty, witty Nell" is always quick to see them and she knows how to set him laughing: Nell, with her mass of reddish brown curls tossed back, her blue eyes almost lost in merry crinkles, (how Pepys adored that trick!) and her sweet husky voice rolling out the old cry . . . as truly a war cry as that amusing French fellow's years ago, for it helped her storm the battlements between the huckster's

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stand in the Lane and the stage of the Theatre Royal . . .
and then on, on, over the walls of a king's pride . . .

Oranges! Buy my oranges!

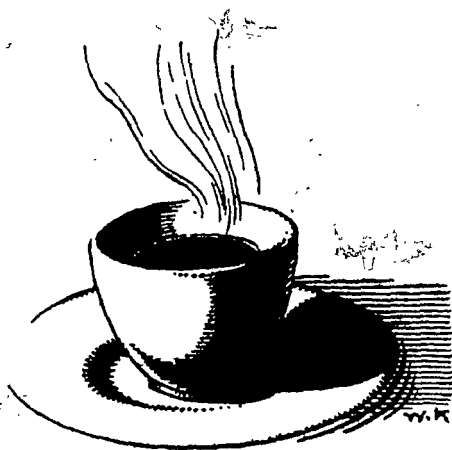
There is no record of an enduring interest on the part of the King in Charles Town, or in the Hudson's Bay Company, or in the "woods" which he gave to Old Penn's son. Appropriately then, at Nell Gwyn's door, we may part with this indifferent, pleasure-loving man, who had, curiously, so important and far-reaching an influence in the development of science, politics and commerce in the modern world; and whose casually signed charters were to do so much to determine the type of civilization which would expand, and prevail, in North America.

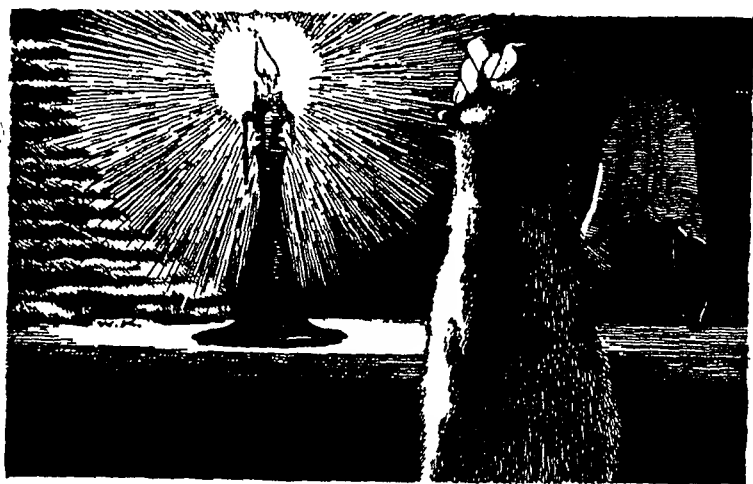
Here lies Our Sovereign Lord, the King,

Whose word no man relies on;

Who never said a foolish thing,

Nor ever did a wise one.





CHAPTER IX

"FROZEN NORTH AND TROPICK HEAT"

A "black beaver," a glossy, dark skin, held aloft for bids, while an inch of wax candle was lighted: bids mounting while the flame burned downward: the last bid, as the wick tumbled and died, won the noble pelt!

The first auction of furs from Hudson Bay was held in December 1671 at the coffee house owned by Thomas Garway and called "Garraway's." It was a sensational event. All London buzzed of it; society as well as commerce attended. Hatters and furriers, merchants and jobbers, shrewd men all of them, and cold bargainers, lost their coolness in the presence of such furs, and such abundance of furs, as they had never seen before, and shouted, and roared one another down, as if noise could keep grease from melting. Relentlessly the wick burned through the

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inch of wax, and its sputtering fall decided the values of sables and beavers and the fortunes of merchants. Lords bought a handsome pelt or two for their own trimming or their ladies'. Rochester, author of the jesting epitaph about his witty and wisdomless friend, Charles, was there; so was John Portman, the goldsmith and most of the "Adventurers of England." Prince Rupert, Governor of the Company, and James, Duke of York, also came to watch the frenzied bidding for "three thousand weight of Beaver Skins, comprised in thirty lots." Literature, too, was represented and Dryden, who was there, may have caught, that day, the inspiration for his lines:

Friend, once 'twas Fame that led thee forth
To brave the Tropick Heat, the Frozen North,
Late it was Gold, then Beauty was the Spur;
But now our Gallants venture but for Fur.

A busy man that day was Mine Host, Thomas Garway! Seeing to it that full purses did not empty all their contents into the Adventurers' pockets: sending his waiters hither and yon with trays of cakes and coffee, punch, pale ale and his justly famed cherry wine: himself running among the lords, between wick-snuffings, with cups of the delicately flavored, aromatic "China Drink," which he popularized.

"Elixir, no less, Milords! Called by the Chineans *Tcha*; by other nations *Tay*, or *Tee*. It is made according to the directions of the most knowing merchants and travellers into those eastern countries. It hath rare powers, Milords, to purge all humors from the blood and to compose and inspire the mind." Tom was London's first tea merchant and he claimed every virtue, medicinal and moral, for his new

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wares; witness the ardent broadsheet he issued. Furs and tea: London took to both at Garraway's.

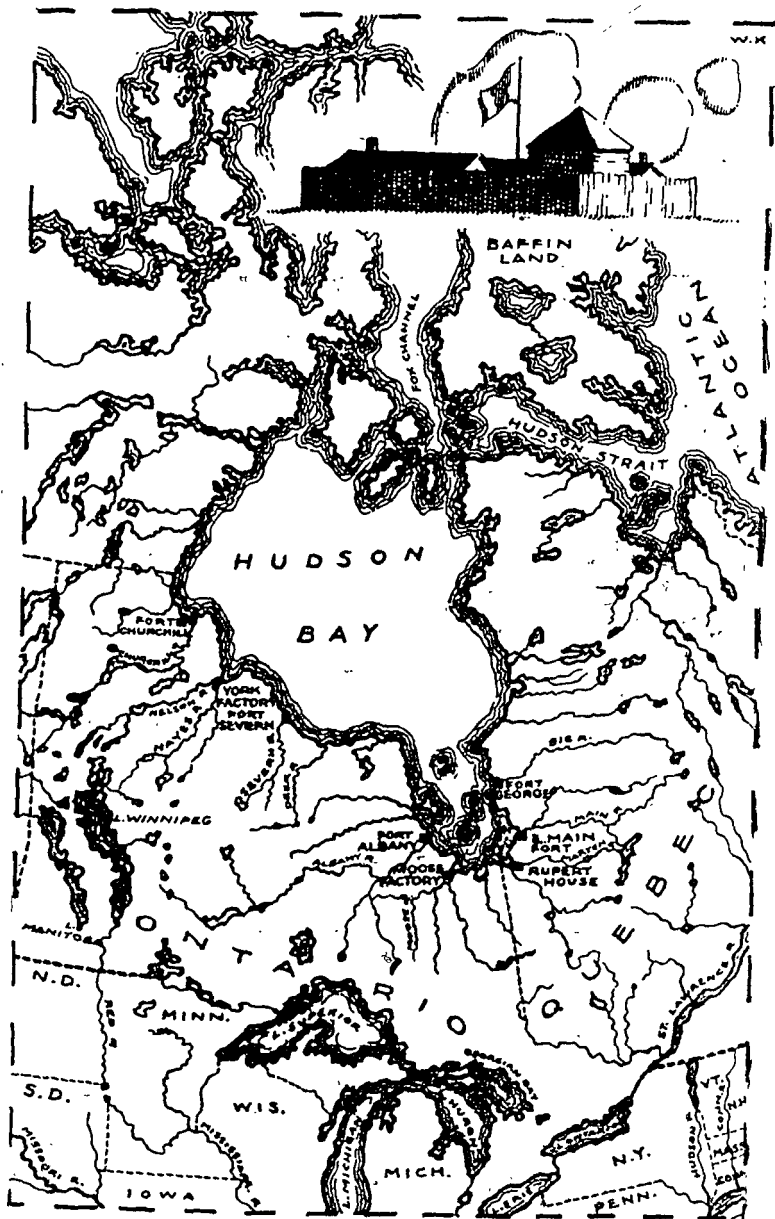
Next spring, the ships of the Adventurers of England went to the Bay again; and, again fortune sailed home in them. The value of the cargoes, during these first years, probably reached a hundred thousand dollars annually; for, a few years later, the Company states "our Returns in Beavers this yeare (by God's blessing) are modestly expected to be worth £20,000." London had entered into the trade at a pace which put her at once into competition with the old fur centres of Europe—Paris, Vienna, Amsterdam, Leipzig—and which would quickly advance her to the leading position in the fur marts of the world.

That advance was not to be made wholly along paths of peace. New France, with Talon to think for her, was thoroughly awake to the menace of an English fur company on Hudson Bay, draining the south and west Beaver Lands which, otherwise, would supply her own market. It may have occurred to some of her grafting officials that their treatment of two great explorers had been scarcely intelligent. It is safe to say that Talon would not have let Radisson and Groseilliers leave Canada with their grudge and their profitable idea, both of which the English could use! But Talon did not arrive until two years after the Governor of Three Rivers had confiscated the first large catch of northern beaver. He was recalled to France, at his own request, in 1668 when the first ship of the Hudson's Bay Company was freezing in for a winter of trade on the bay. When duty forced his return to Canada in May 1670, the ships of the English company were on the high seas bound for the vast new fur domain; and all the powers granted in the charter signed on May 2nd, were behind

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the venture. Talon took note of the British invasion. In the summer of 1671 he sent the Jesuit, Father Albanel, and M. de Saint-Simon overland to Hudson Bay with letters to Groseilliers and to the governor of the trading post, Charles Baily. The duties of the two emissaries en route were to explore the way, take formal possession for France and to make friends of the tribes. Father Albanel was eager for this opportunity to harvest souls; and Talon foresaw a natural trade alliance between New France and any and all converts which the zealous missionary might make. The first journey through the interior from New France to Hudson Bay was important, because it proved that the journey could be made, and without great difficulty, by a long path of linking waters. The pioneers went with Indian guides from Tadoussac up the Saguenay to Lake St. John where winter caught them. They spent the white months in trading councils and conversions. When open water again beckoned to canoes, they went on by one chain of the necklace of rivers which has the large green turquoise of Lake Mistassini for its pendant, reached the lake on June 18th, turned almost due west on the other chain, and, following Rupert river, reached James Bay on the 28th of the month. Here the Adventurers had their headquarters, named Fort Charles in honor of a king who had done at least one "wise thing" in chartering their company.

The arrival of Albanel and Saint-Simon was well timed. Baily of London and the two Bretons from Three Rivers had not been getting along nicely together. It is likely that Baily could not read his own French letter from Talon, which might easily make him the more suspicious of the letter received by Groseilliers. Certainly, with the arrival



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of Albanel's party, friction increased, possibly not without subtle assistance. Baily sailed home with the fur cargo in the fall, taking Father Albanel and Radisson and Groseilliers. Doubtless he feared to leave the two French traders at the post for the winter, now that he knew that Frenchmen had found the way there from Canada. Doubtless, too, he had no faith in the French traders' loyalty to the English company. He probably believed that Radisson and Groseilliers had inspired the visit of Saint-Simon and Albanel with a view to turning the post over to New France as soon as his back was turned. Yes; the Company's ships would return next summer to find the French in possession, augmented by more Canadians, who would come by Albanel's route as soon as the rivers opened; and the Company might lose its vessels and trading supplies as well as Fort Charles! This would be a natural view of the matter for Baily to take. He was a sound Englishman whose loyalty both King and Company could safely rely upon to guard his intelligence against any temptation to understand anything at all which was not British: the type of man who has dotted tragic-comic incidents through the glorious history of British officialdom in far places.

Baily was not a fur trader, within the meaning of the term as used in this book. His contact with the wilderness and wild men was very recent. He had no knowledge of men like these two trader-explorers, who had opened a new empire to England. Radisson and Groseilliers were Bretons by birth: their native land was not France but Brittany. To the Breton of that period French was an acquired tongue, his own tongue was Celtic. The most conservative man on earth, the Breton in France saw the growth of French power largely as a threat to Breton ideals and

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institutions. He was not more French when he emigrated to Canada. Three Rivers was *la patrie* to Radisson and Groseilliers and it was a base, a stepping-off place, to *mon pays*, to *le pays d' En Haut*, the country without other bounds than their own powers of body and will, and where they owned no man lord. They went to Hudson Bay first with Englishmen, later with Frenchmen and, later still, with Englishmen again; and some chroniclers of both nations have been angry with them and called them "traitors." Others have sought to prove that they were really ardent and patriotic Frenchmen all the time and were secretly serving France when they entered English employ. But the simpler and more natural explanation of their conduct is that they were fur traders. Their traditional loyalties were not French but Breton; and their personal genius was for exploration and, in Radisson's case particularly, for the Fur Trade with its necessary management of Indians. Radisson was beloved by the red men, and he was a great trader.

Baily brought his weighty matters before the Company's board in London. Radisson also was heard. Inevitably the directors sided with Baily, their known quantity. Radisson and Groseilliers left the Company's employ and went to France. The Company was to hear more later from these men whose national flag was the beaver pelt, and whose nostalgia for the vast fur lands of the North there was no curing!

Talon believed that his health suffered in Canada; so, again, in 1672, he returned to France, this time to stay. During the brief period of his office he had advanced New France from a fur dépôt into a colony which was largely self-supporting. Shortly before he left he could write home

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that every article of his attire had been made in Canada. Marriages, births, agriculture, milling, stock-breeding, trades of many sorts went on apace; even ship-building had begun. He had finally won the King and Colbert over to free trade; and fur traders were on an equal footing.

A solidly welded colonial structure was now the base for an expanding fur empire; and for the struggle with the English, who challenged French claims to that empire from their beaver-buying stations on the northern bay.

Talon prided himself particularly on his extension of French influence among the tribes. He wrote to the King in 1670.

Since my arrival I have sent resolute men to explore farther than has ever been done in Canada; some to the west and northwest, others to the southwest and south. . . . Everywhere they will take possession of the country, erect posts bearing the King's arms, and draw up memoranda of these proceedings to serve as title-deeds.

He added sanguinely that the discovery of the Western Sea was imminent: "there should not be more than fifteen hundred leagues of navigation to reach Tartary, China and Japan."

Of the several explorers who contributed to geographical knowledge and the Fur Trade the most notable were two men of Norman blood, Louis Joliet and René-Robert Cavelier de la Salle. La Salle was twenty-three when he came to Canada in 1666—the year Radisson went to London—and bought a *seigneurie* near Montreal. He named his estate Saint-Sulpice. By now, the *habitants* were beginning to be scornful of the men who set out to find Chinese gold and spices, and came back with canoes filled with forest peltry. When they heard yet another man, this

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young La Salle, talking ardently of the great discovery which he planned to make, they renamed his *seigneurie* for him, in mockery. They called it "La Chine." Perhaps the mockery was not without some cause in the acts of this new recruit to the ranks of Canadian agriculturists. The young farmer apparently took few turns with the plow. He built a fur-trading post, with a strong stockade about it, and let the Indians know that he was open for business. Three years later he sold "La Chine" to equip an expedition and went into the wilderness, with some of his trading acquaintances, who gave him guides and maps drawn on pelts and such information as they possessed of the world beyond their own domain. On this expedition, following the lead of an Iroquois guide, he discovered the Ohio river—the Beautiful Water of the Iroquois—and floated down it to where Louisville now stands. He may have continued to the junction of the Ohio and the Mississippi, though this seems unlikely because of the dissatisfaction among his crew, who were too far from home to be happy, and the desertions, which were already hampering him. The Father of Waters was known by repute in New France. La Salle believed that it was the long-dreamed-of route to China. On his homeward journey he passed into Illinois and canoed for some miles down the Illinois river. He was back in Montreal the next year. He had not found the way to China. His expedition was regarded as a failure by himself and others—"La Chine," the mocking name, would never pass from the map of Canada! In reality his discovery of the Ohio and his journey to the Falls were of the utmost importance; because New France was to develop into a great beaver empire, and not to become a station on the short route to China. The true significance of the Ohio

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would not be grasped by La Salle's countrymen until after his death.

Talon departed in November 1672 and Louis de Buade, Count Frontenac, ruled in his stead as Governor of New France. Fifty-two years of age, soldier and man of iron, Frontenac was a fitting successor to the "Great Intendant." According to the gossips in Paris, Frontenac had requested this appointment, which was not considered an honor in France at that period, primarily to be relieved of the daily company of an arrogant and shrewish wife. However that may be, Countess Frontenac continued to adorn the society of the *noblesse* in Paris; and her husband went away alone to his great achievement. Through Frontenac's influence La Salle obtained a grant of land and sole right to trade at Cataraqui, the site of the present Kingston, Ontario, where the Governor had erected Fort Frontenac. He set briskly about his trading. Though the opportunities for trade in this region were exceptional, La Salle saw that he could not make enough in a few seasons to finance an expedition to the Mississippi. He was not willing to wait. In the year following his return from the Ohio, the brilliant *coureur-de-bois*, Louis Joliet, accompanied by Father Marquette, and aided by Indian guides, had reached the Mississippi near the present Prairie du Chien and had descended it to the mouth of the Arkansas. La Salle was eager to explore the great river to its mouth. He went to France to see the King and returned with royal sanction for his project, and with a new companion named Henri de Tonty. Tonty was an Italian, a soldier of fortune, who had lost a hand and wore an iron one in its stead. He was to prove himself an intrepid explorer and warrior in the American wilds and a good trader, the loyal

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aid of La Salle and, later, of Iberville; and as "Iron Hand" he would be known to many tribes from Illinois to the Mexican Gulf. In February 1682, La Salle, Tonty and a small party reached the Mississippi, by way of the Illinois river, and descended it to the mouth, where they erected a column and took possession of the surrounding territory for France, naming it for King Louis—"Louisiana." On their return they built Fort Louis on the Illinois, near the present Ottawa, Illinois. La Salle left Tonty in command of the fort and went on to Quebec and, thence, to France where he obtained ships and settlers for the founding of a colony in Louisiana.

No tale of brave men in the wilderness meeting odds too great is better known and loved than the story of La Salle's last and fatal venture. Missing the mouth of the Mississippi, La Salle entered Matagorda Bay and landed on the Texas shore. The first site which he chose for the settlement proved unsatisfactory and he moved his colony to a point five miles above the mouth of the Garcitas river, in the present Victoria county. He set out in search of the Mississippi, where Tonty vainly waited for him. Then he turned north, hoping to reach Fort Louis. Mutiny, which had crippled all his expeditions, arose again and treachery, which may have had its origin among Spanish agents in France, joined with it. Between the Brazos and Navasota rivers, and near the present town of Navasota, La Salle was murdered. Some of his surviving colonists scattered among the Indians; the others, who included his brother, the Abbé Jean Cavelier of Montreal, a Sulpician, crossed the Red river near Texarkana, came at last to the Father of Waters at the mouth of the Arkansas, and ascended to Tonty's fort on the Illinois. They did not tell

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Tonty of La Salle's death; nor that they had left Frenchmen far to the south, destitute and at the mercy of the Indians.

The end of the tale comes from Spanish records. Alonzo de León, Governor of Coahuila, made four expeditions into Texas to search for the French colony and suppress it. On his fourth journey, in 1689, he discovered five cabins surrounding a small fort built of ship's timber with "1684" carved over the door. Weapons, casks, broken furniture, human bones lay on the ground. Further on, he met Indians with whom two of La Salle's colonists were living. One of these survivors had had a hand in La Salle's murder. A touch of extravaganza is added to the story by León's discovery of yet another Frenchman just over the sacred border of Coahuila, and one who was not connected with the ill-fated colony. This man had drifted down, from the Illinois country probably, into Texas. He had made so favorable an impression on the natives that he was now chief of a tribe, which he ruled with pomp and show. Jarri, the Spanish records name him. Poor Jarri's royal state ended abruptly. León took him off to Mexico, a prisoner. Only a brief paragraph from a lost story, which would have been well worth the reading! He must have been a masterful and gifted soul, this Chief Jarri, of whom so little is recorded except Spanish indignation that he should have come to Texas at all.

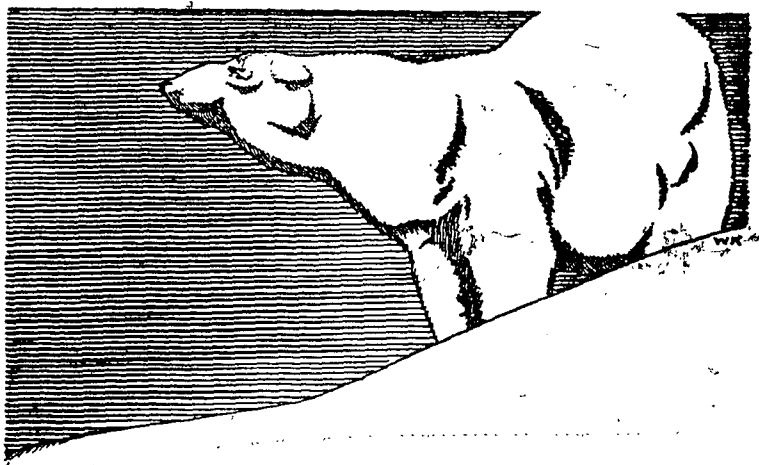
"One of the greatest men of this age," Tonty called La Salle. There is truth in the saying, whether one considers La Salle's personal qualities alone, or, looking ahead fifty years, sees how French expansion followed the outline he drew for it. He was, above all others, the pathfinder of French empire in America. His vision was clear, his plan

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sound; but he was guilty of the sin for which there is no forgiveness among men—that is, he was ahead of his time; and mockery, opposition, treachery, slander and murder were his portion.

At the time when Talon's sceptre fell to Frontenac, and was grasped by a hand as strong, the forerunners of French power, going out from the heart of Canada, reached realms that seemed farther apart then than the poles seem to us—the Frozen North of Hudson Bay and the Tropick Heat of the Mexican Gulf.





CHAPTER X

THE LONG BEAVER WAR BEGINS

FROM 1668, the date of their first voyage to Hudson Bay for furs, to 1682, the Adventurers of England were sole masters of the northern trade. By 1680 they had built two more trading posts, at James Bay, on the Moose and Albany rivers. That the Company had but three posts on the bay, after a decade of successful trading, may seem to record a lack of enterprise. In fact, lack of enterprise and initiative, especially as to exploration, have been freely charged against the Hudson's Bay Company by all its commercial and political opponents, and by writers who may have adopted this critical opinion too readily. It is true that the Company seemed indifferent about adding to geographical knowledge. It sent no expeditions inland to explore, and it ignored the clause in its charter about seeking the short route to the South Sea and China. We

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may examine the charge in the light of our own knowledge of the geography and climate of the Hudson Bay region. The word "bay" is misleading because it is associated in the popular mind with many minor indentations along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Hudson Bay is a large inland sea, nine hundred and fifty miles long and six hundred miles wide. It is a little less than three times the length of Lake Superior and more than three and a half times its breadth. It drains an area more than double the size of the drainage basin of the St. Lawrence river and the Great Lakes. On the north, Foxe Channel and Fury and Hecla Straits—names taken not from the Fur Trade but from the annals of polar exploration—connect it with the Arctic sea. Hudson Strait, its gateway for ships, is over four hundred miles long with an average width of one hundred miles, narrowing at one point to half that, with shores of high rock cliffs, except in the region of Ungava Bay: because of the violence of the tides, which rise to a height of thirty-five feet, it never freezes over completely. The chief difficulty for navigators is the polar ice, which crowds into the bay through Foxe Channel, and streams down past the Atlantic mouth of Hudson Strait in a mass of bergs and floes miles wide. Another handicap to sailors is the proximity of the magnetic pole, on Boothia Peninsula, which frequently robs them of the aid of the compass. Out of experience the Hudson's Bay Company learned that navigation was safe enough between July fifteenth and October first; they learned where the treacherous shoals were in the mouths of the rivers, where there were harbors and where there were none, so that they dared try for haven in fog or blizzards even when the compass failed them. But, in the beginning, they knew none of these things. We know the

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shape of the bay, its size, its many river mouths, and its two chains of islands off the east shore which confused the first explorers who sought to follow the coast line—a coast line many thousand miles long. But they never saw the map we study.

In mid-July they entered a vast sea, how vast they had no idea, and sailed southward into James Bay and anchored off Rupert House, originally Fort Charles, on Rupert river; or off the posts built before 1680 on the Albany and Moose rivers, on the opposite or western shore of James Bay—close by, as distances were reckoned there. The short season for shipping was a strong argument against exploration of Hudson Bay itself, considering that the ships were there to carry home the furs, which were the economic mainstay of both the ships and the trading posts.

The country about James Bay is largely swamp, or muskeg, as it is called in the North, a word borrowed from the Crees. Timber of a fair size grows as far north as the northern entrance of the bay; but north of James Bay, the timber becomes thinner, then ceases, and the ground is marshy and stony. Muskeg makes heavy trailing. There was nothing about this northern swampy ground to suggest that it abutted on China. If Radisson and Groseilliers, imaginative men and intrepid explorers, did not see a mirage of golden Cathay on the western rim of the muskeg, then clerks from London counting houses can hardly be censured if they, also, did not see it. The Indians, who came from their inland homes by canoe—just as Father Albanel came—had no news to tell that sounded as if it had originated in China. Father Albanel saw no Chinese signs at any of the crossroads on his journey. Whatever

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the Governor and Adventurers of England had promised, and probably believed about the short route to the "South Sea," it is unlikely that their employees on the bay had any faith at all in the notion. Their environment did not inspire it.

The summers are short and the winters are long and cold. In those days the nomadic tribes did not winter near Hudson Bay. It was a vast uninhabited country. Explorers from New France, when abroad in their longer summers and shorter winters, were never, strictly speaking, alone in the great wilderness. Hospitable people lived in it; and they could find them and receive succor and food, lodge with them till bad weather passed, be guided back to the trail if they had lost it. The conditions, which assisted the French explorers, were absent from the Hudson Bay region. It does not dim the glory of New France's brilliant *coureurs-de-bois* to note that they were obliged to go inland, seek the Indians, compose differences among tribes and fight their wars, too, occasionally, in order to enlarge French trade. Like other human ideals, glory must be related to an actuality in order to have visibility and motion. The Fur Trade was the sinews of French glory in the western hemisphere.

The immediate objective of the French explorers was fur, and more fur: even when, as with Champlain and La Salle, the dearer dream was China; or, as in the case of Radisson, who was as much thrilled by Indians as any normal lad today, it was the lively desire "to know the remotest people." Although La Salle first sought the Mississippi because he believed that, somewhere along its course, it turned westward and flowed into the South Sea, before he descended it, later, he had learned from Joliet that it

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flowed due south, and he knew that it must empty into the Gulf of Mexico. When he led his colony to that region, it was not to fortify the route to China but to close and bar the back door of the fur empire of New France. The Fur Trade always marked out the path of glory: it was always the deciding factor. And it was, equally, the reason why the English traders on Hudson Bay dug themselves in at their posts during the first decade, and did nothing glorious at all; watched weather and tides, and prayed for a safe passage for their glossy cargoes through the rushing strait and the fogs and bergs off its mouth—where, as likely as not, even their ships' compasses, responsive to a malign invisible sorcerer, would conspire with the northern sea to destroy them.

In 1680 one of the Company's ships, commanded by Captain Draper, cruised along the west coast of Hudson Bay looking for the Nelson river, which had been discovered in 1612 by Sir Thomas Button on his search for Henry Hudson and named by him for his sailing master, Francis Nelson. Draper's report of the Nelson inspired the Company to erect a post there; and in 1682 they sent eighty men to build the fort and open trade. The ship was in command of Zachary Gillam of Boston, who had captained the *Nonsuch* in 1668. Apparently he had come into the Company's service through his acquaintance with Radisson. His son, Ben Gillam, sailed his own ship from Boston into the river, before his father's arrival, and built a post for himself on Gillam Island.

In the meantime Radisson and Groseilliers had returned to Canada and had made a trading connection with the Quebec Compagnie du Nord. They arrived with two ships at Hayes river, which debouches into the bay only a few

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miles from the mouth of the Nelson, and built a fort. During the winter, by a combination of guile and superior arms, they seized the Company's post on the Nelson and free-booting Ben Gillam's as well. They burnt Gillam's post and took this lone interloper and his crew prisoners, carried the Hudson's Bay Company's men to the posts on James Bay, with the exception of the governor of the Nelson post, whom they kept, and sailed, with all the furs, in Ben Gillam's ship—appropriately named *Bachelor's Delight*. Radisson had made a brilliant coup, without bloodshed; and he naturally expected high praise in Quebec. Instead, he was received coldly. It appeared that there were rules of etiquette which must be observed by citizens of nations which were at peace with each other. He had broken them. No doubt the opinions of the Quebec officials seemed to him utterly absurd. He sailed for France, but found officialdom there no more intelligent. The two kings, Louis and Charles, had been drawing closer in recent years and Louis did not wish to annoy his English friend. Much more than a cargo of beaver skins hinged on his secret agreements with Charles II. So Radisson was ordered to return to the bay and to restore to the English there the rivers, territory, ships and fort sites—apparently he had burned the buildings—which he had taken in the name of France.

These diplomatic niceties were too bewildering for Radisson, whose flag was a beaver pelt. Since he must restore Nelson and Hayes rivers, which tapped such enormous fur regions, to a representative of the Hudson's Bay Company, he chose to be, himself, the representative to receive them! He could reason that the Company, not being politicians but fur traders like himself, would rather have him

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with them than against them, after their recent taste of his quality as a rival. Instead of going to the bay he went to England, and called on the Adventurers; and they said "come back to us." No doubt they said other things, too, in their heated conferences at the "Excise Office" in Broad Street where they now held their meetings: even at Garraway's, as they served more roasted pullets to their spoiler, the walls may have echoed to other sentiments than praise. But they could afford to let bygones be bygones now that they had with them once more the man who was the king of fur traders in that period. His new stories would have a lively interest for them. He had seen more groups of the "remotest people," and also the fur-bearing regions they inhabited; for, in order to let the Indians know that he was back and open for trade at a new post, on the Hayes, he had gone up the river by canoe, fallen in with hunting Crees and continued with them to Lake Winnipeg. Thus he was the first white man to start furs moving on Hayes river; which, in future years, would become famous as the chief route of the *voyageurs* from the Canadian Northwest to Hudson Bay. This was Radisson's second visit to Lake Winnipeg. Eighteen years before, he had reached it from the St. Lawrence. At that time he may have canoed some distance down the Hayes, if not to the bay; it is impossible to trace his trails, for his accounts are not clear and he was no cartographer.

The Adventurers of England gave him a ship, pleasantly named *Happy Return*; and, accompanied by two little vessels, *Success* and *Adventure*, he sailed, in May 1684, for his fort where he had left Groseilliers' son, Jean Chouart, and seven companions to carry on the trade. Opening up the Hayes river route had been a brilliant



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stroke. His little Fort Bourbon—now renamed York—was stuffed with furs. He left the English governor, Thomas Phipps, in charge, and, early in September he sailed for London with a wealth of peltry. He was received like a conquering hero by the Company; and Charles sent for him, to hear more stories. From this time on, Radisson appears to have been associated with the Hudson's Bay Company; there are records of sums paid to him, as shares, or salary and, later, perhaps as his pension, and he and the Company seem to have had one dispute about money which got into the courts. Radisson was no business man; and, in dealing with white men, he was a poor diplomatist. He lost his first great catch of northern beaver to the crafty Governor of Three Rivers. His second great catch he left in Quebec with his partners of the *Compagnie du Nord* while he went to France, to learn that he should never have taken the Englishmen's furs at all. The *Compagnie du Nord*, in the meantime, pocketed the profits of his haul. They had a patriotic excuse for leaving him out of the money after he rejoined the Adventurers. The place and year of Radisson's death are not positively known, but it is thought that he died in England in 1710, being then about seventy-four years old.

The *Compagnie du Nord* chose to consider themselves the proprietors of the trading post, which Radisson had built on the Hayes during his brief association with them. They knew that Radisson had gone to France, where his recent performance on the bay would bring him into ill favor with high officials; in short, he was, so they thought, safely out of the way. So they sent Monsieur de La Martinère, with two shiploads of trading goods, and Father Silvy as confessor, to Hayes river to assume control of

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"Fort Bourbon" and of the trade of that region. The French vessels arrived at the fort eight days after Radisson and Jean Chouart and many thousands of beaver skins had left it. They found a "Fort York" flying the English flag. Their feelings are adequately reflected in the acrimonious journal written by Father Silvy. Reading between the linês, one gathers that the French tried to provoke a fight but that Phipps kept his head and relied on the legal security of his position. The French wintered on French Creek, which flows into the Hayes, made an unsuccessful attack on the English post, sent Phipps numerous insulting messages, and, when the river opened, attempted to intercept the Indian fur brigade above Fort York and capture the trade, on the pleas that they were "Radisson's countrymen." They failed with the Crees, who did not know a Frenchman from an Englishman in those days, but did know the trading post to which their friend had brought them, after his long canoe journey to find them, and to which he had bidden them come again. Several of the Frenchmen got their faces frozen, lying in wait to murder four hunters whom they had seen go out from the English post: warned by Crees, the hunters returned by another path. On the whole, not a pleasant winter for the Quebec party. When summer came, they sailed for home with little peltry and with bitter hearts, that were hardly sweetened by their pirating of a small ketch belonging to the Adventurers, on their way out of the bay. Says Father Silvy:

I did not fail to call to our captives' attention the difference between the character of the English and that of the French which is so humane, kind, benevolent, faithful, religious and truly Christian.

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In this year, 1685, Charles II died and his brother ascended the throne as James II. The spirit of French policy changed. Briefly, there was no need to consider James' feelings. Disliked and distrusted by his own subjects, a catholic ruler of a resolutely protestant realm, a royal devotee of the old theory of the divine right of kings in the midst of common men restless for more freedom and fearing curtailment of such liberties as they had, James could not afford to quarrel with France. This state of affairs was soon reflected in King Beaver's domain. Frontenac, the "Iron Governor" heard the hour of opportunity strike.

In 1686, the Chevalier de Troyes led a raiding expedition against the posts on James Bay. His force consisted of thirty soldiers, seventy *coureurs-de-bois*, with Father Silvy as their confessor, and three sons of Charles Le Moyne of Montreal—Pierre Le Moyne D'Iberville, in that year twenty-five years of age, and his brothers, Maricourt and Ste Helène. The records we have are fragmentary, but a student of fur history would surmise that the expedition was at least of academic interest to the Compagnie du Nord. England and France were at peace and there was no excuse for a military expedition to James Bay. It was not a military expedition, it was a fur raid. Iberville and Troyes started from Montreal and travelled by the Ottawa and Moose rivers to Moose Factory. They lay in the woods till dark, then rushed upon the post, and captured its small group of sleepers and all their furs. Losing no time, Iberville led part of the invading army to the two other posts on James Bay, which he seized as easily. "Fort" was a courtesy title for the Company's trading posts, which were not built to resist military attack. The few small cannon

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had been mounted chiefly to impress the Indians. Troyes and most of his men started back immediately, in order to reach Montreal before winter. Iberville remained in command of the captured forts until the summer of 1687 when he sailed for Quebec, leaving his brother, Maricourt, to reign in his stead.

In England, the Adventurers petitioned the King, who had been their Governor after Rupert's death in 1682, and was a shareholder, but in vain. Iberville went back again in 1688, or 1689, for more furs, and to strengthen the French hold on the James Bay posts. In 1689 James was driven from England. With the accession of William of Orange to the English throne came war with France. From that date until 1713, when France surrendered all claims to Hudson Bay under the Treaty of Utrecht, both French and English traders were on the bay. They raided each other's posts, captured and lost them again, and blazed at each other's decks whenever they met at sea. One of these salty encounters can be properly called a naval engagement, since it took place, in 1697, while the two nations were at war. We have a participant's account of this battle among the ice floes, with polar bears overlooking the field from their white bleachers. Claude Charles Le Roy de la Potherie, author and soldier, was appointed commissary of the fleet; which, he says, had been generously lent by the King to the Compagnie du Nord. In short, it was another fur raid to which the five ships sailed from La Rochelle in Normandy to Hudson Bay. A fourth Le Moyne, Lieutenant Serigny, on the *Palmier*, commanded in the absence of his brother, Captain d'Iberville, who was busy destroying the English fishing settlements in Newfoundland, "so as to interrupt their trade." The fleet took Iberville

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aboard at Placentia Bay, and he assumed command, with the *Pelican* for his flagship. They entered Hudson Strait in a gale, which iced their rigging. Solid masses of floes, and big bergs in the channels between, forced them to change their course "every moment." The sorcerer in Boothia was probably busy, for they seem not to have known precisely where they were, or whither going. They decided to tie up to a solid ice field, which had come down to block their path. This difficult feat was barely accomplished when the mass broke up violently and the ships were cast adrift on a boiling tide. The *Pelican* smashed into the *Palmier* and damaged both, and the small brigantine *Esquimaux* was crushed to splinters by the tumbling floes. Two masses of ice, welded into one by the swift tide, caught the *Profond* and the *Weesph* fast between them. "There was not a vessel that had not lost some of her parts." Currents and twisting winds continued to play with them, like corks, even tossing them out into the strait again after they had made the bay. Fog descended and hid everything. The men on deck saw little more than their own rigging and one another's faces. They floated in a blank world. When the fog lifted they saw three English vessels, the warship *Hampshire*, of fifty-six guns, and two of the Company's armed merchantmen, the *Hudson's Bay* and the *Dering*. Ice separated the *Hampshire* from her companions. The *Profond*, now free of ice, was in the most danger; the lifting fog had shown her the foe face to face. She carried all the supplies and trading goods of the Compagnie du Nord; and, fearing capture, she turned and dashed down a lane of water, with the *Hudson's Bay* and the *Dering* after her. Current, ice field and wind entered into the game merrily again, caught the three ships to-

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gether, and apparently brought a school of walruses down on the ramming floes, to watch the fight: La Potherie remarks on the whiteness of their "teeth." The ice-fast vessels battled intermittently all day; but they were so placed in relation to one another that their guns could do little damage. Another movement of the ice, several hours later, freed the *Hudson's Bay* and the *Dering* and sent them, with the *Hampshire*, in the direction of Iberville's *Pelican*. The *Pelican* ran past the little *Hudson's Bay*, raked her with fire and disabled her. The *Dering*, which also carried supplies, emulated the *Profond* and scampered off with her load of beads and powder. She reached Hayes river and cast anchor, but tide and wind sunk her at her mooring. The two major vessels fought stubbornly in their patch of clear water, tearing away rigging with every broadside. The *Pelican* was leaking through seven holes in her hull when the *Hampshire* suddenly foundered with all hands. Wind and tide, which had done for the *Dering*, threw the victorious *Pelican* on the shoals of the river, with the lamed *Hudson's Bay*, and wrecked them both. Looking upon the catastrophe that had overtaken the French flagship and her prize, beset by new perils in salvaging and mounting cannon for an attack on the English trading post, York Factory, the scholarly La Potherie cried out in the words of Horace, who, however, "had never found himself in so cruel a situation."

Illi robur, et oes triplex

Circa pectus erat, qui fragilem. . . .

If not Horace, then it was Virgil, whose poetic limnings of fantastic, or tragic, scenes leaped to La Potherie's lips during the long day while the battle raged with ice, tide,

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wind, fog, and humankind. Once upon a time, in sunny Italy, child-hearted St. Francis delivered the first sermon ever preached to birds. From a navy commissary, with an astonishing poise and a prodigious memory, polar bears and walruses in Hudson Bay acquired their taste for the classics. Lewis Carroll could have done something nice about Horace and the Walrus.

There are two accounts of the surrender of York, La Potherie's and the brief diary jottings of Herbert Kelsey, a clerk at the post. Surrender was inevitable. The fort was not equipped to withstand a siege; and the French, reinforced presently by the men from their three other ships, were in vastly superior numbers. How strong, even in the face of sure defeat, was the ruling passion among fur traders can be divined from Kelsey's journal, with its laconic entry to the effect that he had rewarded some Indians for bringing in the *Hudson's Bay's* captain and "*traded ye others Beaver and sent ym away*"! On the arrival of the *Palmier*, *Profond* and *Weesph*, Iberville sent a harsh note embodying the terms he would grant. Surrender must be immediate, otherwise, "no quarter." Doubtless he held in lively remembrance a former expedition against York Factory, in 1691, when Governor Phipps had used the time allowed him for deliberation to fire his stock of trading goods, worth about \$40,000; and so had prevented the conquerors from doing any business with the Indians.

friday ye 3d fair weather, wind ditto. Finding such great force as nine hundred men & ye ill tidings of our own ships concluded could not keep it & so agreed to ye articles—& ye french took possession of ye fort. This being the end of a Tedious winter & tragical Journal by me Henry Kelsey.



CHAPTER XI

BRAHMINS OF THE NORTH

THE first servant of the Hudson's Bay Company to earn an explorer's glory was Henry Kelsey. His diaries have only recently come to light.

Kelsey sailed with Radisson and Phipps, as an apprentice, in 1684; he was fourteen years old. Perhaps, during the long winter evenings, Radisson, lover of Indians and king of story-tellers, told the English boy tales of the red men in their lodges and kindled in him a desire to know them. Kelsey was romantic, even to the point of trying to write poetry; and the strange and beautiful Indian race appealed to him irresistibly. He began at once to make friends among the Crees and to learn their language. This was duly reported to the powers in London. In 1688, when Kelsey was eighteen, the Company wrote to the gov-

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Governor at York Factory and suggested that "the Boy Henry Kelsey" be sent to explore the north country about Churchill river "because Wee are informed hee is a very active Lad, Delighting much in Indians Comp^y being never better pleased than when hee is Travelling amongst them."

Why this sudden eagerness for exploration? There were at least two reasons. The Adventurers of England had now held their charter for nearly twenty years and they had, as yet, made no effort to discover the short passage to the South Sea. In certain quarters criticism of them was severe on this account. It would avail nothing to answer that none of their traders on the bay believed in a passage in that part of the world, because the Indians' reports of large nations far to the west of their own western homes proved that the continent was wide and the Pacific a long way off. The critics would only twist this to strengthen their charges that the Adventurers were greedy fur traders and nothing more, and that they should lose their charter for not living up to their engagements. It will be remembered that, when the huguenot, De Monts, held the monopoly in New France, the Hatters stirred up the Norman parliament to rescue the souls of the Indians from a heretic. A similar zeal, not for souls, but to crown England with the glory of a great discovery, took possession of the Felt-Makers Guild in London; who, like the French Hatters, thought that they were, and probably were, paying too much for beaver. The Company had to do something about exploration, because the Felt-Makers could wield a good deal of influence against them. That was one reason for sending Kelsey to Churchill river. It did not prevent the Felt-Makers from petitioning the King four years later.

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Another reason was the loss of the three James Bay posts, captured by Iberville in 1686 and still held by the Compagnie du Nord of Quebec. It was a good time to send someone to explore along the Churchill (so named in honor of the Company's new Governor, later Duke of Marlborough) which Jens Munk, the Dane, had discovered in 1619 when he sought the short route to China. The river must tap a rich fur territory; all northern rivers did. Kelsey knew his masters' minds evidently, for he jotted down that he was to "discover and Endeavour to bring to a Commerce ye northern Indians." Kelsey took a half-caste boy, named Thomas Savage, with him and struck inland from Churchill river on June 27, 1689. He found it hard going, chiefly ponds and low stony hills, the ponds sending up "abundance of Musketers"; and he was deluged with rain "having no shelter but ye heavens for a Canope"! He went inland a little over one hundred and twenty miles, and then was forced to turn back because Thomas flatly refused to go any further. Kelsey says Thomas called him a fool because he refused to be "sensible of ye dangers." On Sunday July 9th he made a new discovery, in zoology not geography. He was probably the first white man to see the Canadian Musk Ox.

Setting forward, good weather and going as it were on a Bowling green; in ye Evening spyed two Buffilo. . . . They are ill shapen beast, their Body being bigger than an ox; leg and foot like ye same but not half so long, . . . Their Horns not growing like other Beast but Joyn together upon their forehead and so come down ye side of their head and turn up till ye tips be Even with ye Buts; their Hair is near a foot long.

The Churchill is wide near its mouth and, to cross it, they had to build a raft; but wood was so scanty that the raft

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was too small for them: "so put ye Boy and things on it and swim'd over it myself, being very cold." This jaunt into the North and Kelsey's laconic jottings give us an insight into his quality: he was strong, fit, eager, fearless and happy. Next year, 1690, Governor Geyer of York wrote to the Company that he had just sent Kelsey, "who chearfully undertook the Journey—to call, encourage and invite the remoter Indians to a Trade with us." Kelsey was twenty, that year. He started off with a band of Indians, not handicapping himself with Thomas nor any white companion, and he did not return until the summer of 1692. He travelled some six hundred miles in a southwesterly direction to a point not yet determined which he named Derings Point: and from there he pushed on another five hundred and eighty-five miles into the great west, passing from one tribe to another, making peace between quarrellers, and inviting nations, remote indeed, to come to the bay for trade. Among these nations were the Assiniboines and the Mandans. He was the first white man to see the Saskatchewan river, the first to meet the grizzly bear and to hunt buffalo in Manitoba. Spanish explorers in the Southwest, of course, saw the buffalo before Kelsey's time. The only record of Kelsey's first year on this long trail is a few pages of rhyme infused with a buoyant spirit that reminds us pleasantly of the youth of this brave explorer, the only white man in the far West. In the forest bordering the Great Plains he sampled hazel nuts and choke cherries, probably the smaller, sharper and redder cherries too.

Which hither part is very thick of wood
Affords small nutts with little cherreyes very good.
Thus it continues till ye leave ye woods behind

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And then you have beast of severall kind.

The one is a black a Buffilo great

Another is an outgrown Bear wch is good meat . . .

He is man's food & he makes food of man.

The prairie "affords nothing but Beast & grass"; three days travel took him across it to forest again.

This wood is poplo ridges with small ponds of water

There is Beavour in abundance but no Otter.

His prose account of the next year contains descriptions of the country, its inhabitants and their beliefs and customs, and of buffalo and grizzlies and the Indian methods of hunting them.

While away on this glorious adventure, Kelsey married. He brought his wife home to York with him, and thereby ran counter to certain rulings of the board in London, who had ever an eye to the conventions and who penned many wise letters regarding treatment of "ye Savages." The gist of the letters was that the Savages were to be stopped from going to war with one another, which interfered with trapping, they were to be taught respect for the Company and reliance upon it, and their women were to be barred from the forts. The secretary with busy quill in hand, in the office which was now in the Coachmakers Hall on Noble Street, his smoky window looking on things long established, would not be able to visualize Little Giant, as the Crees called Kelsey, at the fort gate on the bay, with the Indian girl who had put hundreds of miles between herself and her own tribe and the only life she knew to go with the white man. Kelsey's reply to the governor, who refused her admittance, was brief and pointed: either his wife came in with him or he returned with her to her own people. So Mrs. Kelsey came in.

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In his marriage also, Kelsey was a trail-blazer. The Indian wife at the white trader's post was to be one of the chief influences in bringing about and maintaining those harmonious and profitable trading relations so much desired at Coachmakers Hall. Clan loyalty was a powerful motive with the Indian: and he regarded the white man who married into his tribe as a kinsman.

Kelsey compiled a dictionary, which the Company printed, and he urged the apprentices to learn the languages of the Indians who came to trade. He seems to have made one more trip, at least, northward, probably in the Churchill region. Perhaps he wished to go in search of the river of red water, which Indians had told him about, for the Governor and Committee in England mentioned copper and mines in one letter to him: "as for discoveries of mines etc it is noe time to think upon them now. In times of Peace Something may be done." Kelsey was made in turn a Chief Trader and a Factor; and, lastly, he was Governor of York Factory with all the posts on the bay under his rule. For a time his headquarters were at Albany on James Bay. In the Albany records and the Minute Books in London there are references to "Mrs. Eliz Kelsey," to whom some part of her husband's salary was paid during Kelsey's absences in England, or at other bay posts. Her name appears again in the Company's papers for 1730, when, as Kelsey's widow, she asked for a pension: still later she requested the Company to make her son, John Kelsey, an apprentice and to outfit him. Was Mrs. Eliz Kelsey the Indian girl from the far West? The fact that she lived on the bay is almost proof that she was not a white woman, despite the "Eliz."

What of the French traders living on Hudson Bay?



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Because of their notable success with the Indians of the St. Lawrence valley and the Great Lakes, it is interesting to discover that they were not always in good odor with the red men of the north. There were some Indians who liked them, but others developed grudges, inspired partly, no doubt, by inferior cloth and higher prices. The full weight of wool in cloth and blankets was important in their territory, with its long cold winters. English goods were of that quality. To this day "Hudson-Bay-blanket" is the Indian standard. One year, Indians attacked a French fort on the Hayes, looted it and killed seven of the garrison. Nothing of the sort ever happened to a post of the Hudson's Bay Company. The French cannot have liked life on the bay, for they ignored the simple rules for comfort and safety. They let the forts fall into disrepair, with leaky roofs—because snow had not been cleared off them—and angered the Indians by trading them goods which had lain in a damp storehouse. Wet powder and rusted guns were of no use on the game trails. The French also received hard hits in the fur war, which they had started. When it was one of their shiploads of goods, which was sent to the bottom of the sea, their Indians were in dire straits. In 1714 when the forts were handed back to England, Governor James Knight found even York Factory "all run to nothing" with pools on the floors, so that he dared not put his goods inside. Several hundred Indian skeletons lay in the woods along the Nelson and Hayes rivers within a few hundred miles of the factory.

If the French sent explorers out, by either land or sea, their records have not come to light. It seems unlikely that they did. The one curious and dauntless Frenchman who entered that region was Radisson, and he made only one

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trip inland, from the bay to Lake Winnipeg. Jean Chouart, Groseilliers' son, who remained for some years, at least, in the Hudson's Bay Company's employ, did not inherit his uncle's, nor his father's, mantle. Kelsey says that "Gooseberry" and another *coureur-de-bois* were engaged by the Company to seek out new tribes and invite them to trade, but that neither of them had gone even two hundred miles into the country. Frenchmen, no more than Englishmen, sought for a passage to China via the great bay of the North. If Frenchmen did not repeat here the great exploring feats of their nation in New France, it is not surprising that Englishmen, who now had their first contact with the wilderness, did not immediately become explorers. Quebec, or Montreal, or Three Rivers was home to the *coureurs-de-bois*, thence they departed for the unknown, thither they returned. On the bay they were already a very long way from home; and a James Bay or Hayes river post never became home, a starting point and a place of return, to them. The bay was also a long way from home for the Englishmen, who arrived on little ice-battered sailing vessels to govern at trading posts on the rim of Nowhere. Quite naturally, the first English explorer from Hudson Bay—and one of the boldest in all the annals of the Fur Trade—was "the Boy, Henry Kelsey" who had grown up on the bay, who called York Factory "home" and whose intimates were those far travellers, the Crees.

Kelsey was not only the first British trader-explorer on the bay, he was also the prototype of a new caste: the Northern fur traders were, and are, a caste, an aristocracy, a class apart. After two centuries and a half, after the passing of the chartered monopoly, his spiritual de-

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scendants reign still at the isolated posts in the Land of Long Winter. Castes are based very particularly on family, on blood. Kelsey was the first English trader on the bay, so far as we know, to marry an Indian woman and to set her among his white associates with full honors as his wife. His example was soon followed by others. Richard Norton of Fort Churchill married a Cree. His sons entered the Company's service, and one of them, Moses Norton, was educated in England and, later, became governor at Churchill. Although monogamy was not the marriage system among the tribes trading at the bay, some of them, the Crees certainly, had heard much from the two Jesuits, who remained during the French occupation, of the sinfulness of polygamy. Therefore they knew that it was the white man's custom to have only one wife at a time. This was pleasing to the white man's *manitou*. So they felt that they were being shown due respect when a white chief took one of their women to be his only wife, in accordance with his religion. They trusted that white man. The pride of his red kin by marriage was second only to the wife's, thus singled out for a peculiar honor on earth and the favor of her husband's heaven. In general, the part-Indian sons, who had been educated in Britain, and who returned to the North to work up to the positions of traders, chief traders, factors, governors, married one wife. This was the rule; but there was, at least, one conspicuous exception in Governor Moses Norton of Churchill. Norton must have been an interesting character. He was a forceful ruler of his large realm, and a highly successful trader; he had served the Company efficiently and earned his promotions. He wrote concise, well-phrased letters and had "made some progress in literature," to quote Samuel Hearne. He sailed

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to England for the purpose of laying his plans for exploration before the Company in London; and it was due to him that Hearne—whom he selected—made his several journeys into the wilds, on one of which he discovered the Coppermine river. This was Norton as the progressive and energetic official. But, in his personal life, Norton was an Indian. He married in the Indian, and not the English, manner; and there were elements of jealousy and ferocity in his nature which blazed savagely, on occasion. The few known facts about Moses Norton are in the brief, rather lurid, description by Hearne, who smarted under the domination of this lordly chieftain, and resented him as a mixed blood commanding his superior, a white man; and who condemned Norton for his personal life as if he were a degenerate European, when he was, probably, only a polygamous Indian. Moses Norton's is one of the tantalizing lost stories of the Fur Trade. Here was a man who lived two lives and preserved the balance between them—as if he weighed gold dust equally in two halves of a scale. What was the individual thing in Moses Norton, which held the scale? We cannot even guess what it was from the meagre, external details set down by his only reporter, a young Englishman with a sense of propriety.

Norton had a friend, a Cree chief named Matonabbee, who had been brought up by Richard Norton as his adopted son. Matonabbee's outstanding service to Moses Norton and the Company was in bringing about peace between his own people, the northern Crees, and their ancient foes of Athapaskan stock; which resulted in the Athapaskans coming into the trade. His life was on the hazard many times during the negotiations. When Hearne went inland with the Indians on his great exploration,

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Norton sent Matonabee with him, to be his guard and guide. Among Norton's children was a daughter, Mary, who was dearly loved by her father and the object of his special care; no harsh wind might blow on her. The natural beauty of her character shines through Hearne's tender, compassionate pen picture of her. Moses Norton died. French war vessels appeared before the ill-manned fort and compelled its surrender. Mary Norton was treated by the conquerors as a part of the loot: and old Matonabee hanged himself rather than survive the shame and the disaster which had fallen upon the Company, on Governor Hearne and the daughter of his dead friend, all of whom he had served with the loyalty which he gave first to Moses Norton.

Tragedy did not befall all the daughters of Northern traders. As a general thing, they became the wives of white traders, or of traders' half-white sons. It was very seldom, in the earliest days, that daughters were sent to English, or Scotch, schools. Sons were, if they indicated any aptitude for learning. On their return some, like Moses Norton, rose in the service, and others reverted to the Indian, not partly, like Moses Norton, but completely. It was not unusual for one brother to be the trader in charge of the post, and the other an Indian trapper. No wonder the tie between the tribes and the Company was so strong; they and the Company's traders were one family.

In the North, as in Canada, the Fur Trade wrought changes in the Indian world, but it would be difficult to point out where it harmed the Indians, except during the French occupation. Once competition was eliminated, the Indians prospered as well as the Company. Liquor was not used in the barter for furs; and the traders themselves

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were not hard drinkers. Furs had one value at the trading posts and another in the London market. In London, no one could have bought them for beads and powder, for a gun, a woollen blanket, or for so much oatmeal. In the forest English guineas even multiplied by hundreds, would have had no value. The soft sheen of buttons and beads was always more beautiful, to the Indian eye, than the glitter of gold. The Indian was satisfied with what he got for his furs. As to the time and terms of payment, the trader frequently advanced thousands of dollars worth of goods, the ammunition and traps needed for the hunt and, also, the meal and cloth which each hunter wanted. He had only the Indian's promise that furs to the value of the goods would be brought to the post next spring, a year later: but it was the promise of a man who never broke his word. On his part, the Company's trader kept faith with the Indian: good powder, good blankets, beads properly made, so that the needles sold to the Indian woman could thread them and embroider them on her fabric, and the best Scotch oatmeal for the Cree's porridge—sacred dish of his Highland brother-in-law—were paid for furs. "A skin for a skin"—*Pro Pelle Cutem*—is the Company's motto. Its representatives in the field have lived up to it. In times of stress, the Indian asked the trader for help and got it. Manliness in peril and in sorrow; honor, his yea, yea, and his nay, nay; and hospitality to the needy: the civilized man could not fall below the savage in exemplifying these elemental virtues, and retain the savage's confidence and respect.

Slowly there developed on the bay the new caste, the new aristocracy, which was to spread its power and its ideals over the whole Northwest. As in all high castes there are

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greater and lesser lords, so there were in the Fur Trade. The resident traders may be called the Brahmins. The word of each was law over a vast territory, the law to red men and white. Their pride went beyond pride but it was noble, because it was allied with generosity and responsibility; duty and service were actualities, not lip motions. They made their employers rich, they themselves were never wealthy: great possessions might seem to be of supreme importance in London but, in the North, possessions occupied only their proportionate and fit place in the pattern of life. No organization was ever served with greater loyalty than the Hudson's Bay Company: few have been given loyalty as deep and firm. To the English and Scotch traders, the Company was more than employer, it was the link with their sources, with the homeland which grew dearer in memory as it became a part of an irrecoverable past. It was not the ocean which separated them from Edinburgh and London: distance by sea or land can be crossed whenever men have a will for the journey. It was the life they led as Brahmins of the North. They breathed space as well as air and looked on largeness instead of limits, and knew that, farther than eye could see, they were the law and the power, subject only to the five fingers of Jehovah-Manitou—the Seasons and Death.

The way of love in the wilderness widened the cleavage between the new life and the old. There the man was lord of love; and his mate saw a glory about his head, like the shining antlers of the Red Deer. She demanded his supremacy in all things, tacitly, by trusting herself and her children wholly to it: as a wife, her traditions were usefulness and a love without reserves. It was not strange that her offering appealed potently to the normal nature of the

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white man, exiling himself—for whatever reasons; financial, or mere love of adventure—from civilization in that era, when the values of chastity and constancy were artificially obscured by a highly lacquered innocence which must not be breathed upon; in short, an ideal of young womanhood pleasurable, surely, to no man save a dancing master, or a male modiste, and which inspired even the poets to sing falsetto. He and she might live together with no more of mind in their association than if they were two sagacious beavers; or their relationship might move through the intimate hours on the rhythm of a richer harmony. There are lines in Indian love songs which suggest it.

Come, my Beloved, let us go up that shining mountain,
And sit together on that shining mountain;
There we will watch the Sun go down in beauty
From that shining place.

and:—

You have brought down to me from above
The trail of happiness. . . .
Your soul has come into the centre of my soul
Never to turn away.

Before the Brahmins arose in the North, there were men in New France who had discovered that Indian women were beautiful; but their unions were different from the marriages of the northerners. The roving Frenchman left his wife in her people's village, and his children to the care of their red kin and the missionary; the tie involved small responsibility. The English and Scotch traders in the North brought their wives into their homes and fulfilled the duties of fatherhood. If a single figure may typify the young woman of the wilderness and her revivifying influ-

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ence on the primal man lurking behind a wall of civilized conventions, let the first of her kind be the model, the girl-wife of "the Boy, Henry Kelsey," as she stands outside York Factory. Bearing deathless embers from the primitive's fire she has crossed ten thousand years of time; and she waits, only briefly, before a door that must open.

Many of the Brahmins of the North belonged to high castes at home. They were poor relations of English noblemen and country gentlemen, of Scottish chiefs and lairds; or of the powerful merchants of the realm. They could do much better for themselves on the bay than in Britain, if they were equal to the hard phases and perils of a trader's life. To us, the salaries of employees and the profits of the employer, in so far as we know them from a very few figures, seem absurdly disproportionate. But salaries were probably as fair in the Fur Trade as they were then in other trades: and, while profits may have been large during the first decade, although no dividend was paid to the Proprietors until 1684, they became uncertain, to say the least, during the long wrangle with the French. Ice and storm played their part from the beginning, and sank goods sailing into the bay and furs coming out of it. The Adventurers of England not only were in a private war of their own with the Compagnie du Nord from 1682 to 1713, on Hudson Bay, they were also hard hit, with their nation at home, by England's wars with France. Kelsey's salary when he was Deputy-Governor of York was five hundred dollars per year, but there is also a note about paying him a hundred and twenty dollars as his share in some furs sold, though the Company, at that time, did not give traders shares in the catch. Salaries may have been lowered, for the French had been playing merry havoc

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with the Company's income during Kelsey's period of service. It must be remembered also that, in 1697 under the Treaty of Ryswick, the Company surrendered all their posts, except Albany, to the French. A hundred years later, the North-West Company of Montreal organized on a profit-sharing basis, and the Adventurers of England adopted the same plan.

What did these educated and cultured Brahmins do with their spare time, of which they had plenty during the long winters? They read, principally. The Company's ships brought newspapers, months old, but which served to keep the Brahmins sufficiently informed of world events: and books, new volumes from the publishers, and their own libraries from the old manse in Scotland, or from the home in Essex or Surrey, where scholarly men of their name had been collecting books since the first days of printing. Behind the thickly iced window in a room with a hot stove—or, earlier, a hearth—and fat candles burning, the trader, according to his taste, pored over Chaucer, the Bible, Bacon, Hume, the Latin and Greek classics in the original, Milton (a great favorite at the Company's posts), Shakespeare, Coleridge. The works of new poets of worth came to the North as the years passed and new poets appeared in England: and the findings of historians, scientists, philosophers. Astronomy was a favorite study, so was zoology. In the latter field valuable contributions were made by the scholarly traders on the bay: witness Thomas Hutchins, who introduced the Hutchins Goose to natural history. Sometimes scientists, braving the North in the pursuit of knowledge, took passage in the Company's ships. In the summer of 1768, there arrived at Churchill William Wales, F.R.S., one of the leading astronomers and math-

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ematicians of his day. He had been sent out by the Royal Society to observe the transit of Venus over the sun on June 3, 1769. Wales accompanied Cook, later, on his voyage around the world. It is hardly possible to overestimate the inspiration of such visits to the traders of the bay posts: Young Hearne must have learned a great deal during the year which Wales spent at Churchill.

Music was also a part of life. Traders played flutes and fiddles and sang, and taught their dusky children old Scotch and English airs. The skirling of bagpipes was much appreciated by Indian guests. Of all the music they heard in the traders' log tepees, it most resembled their own wild, fierce, and mournful melodies. Yet the Brahmins knew hours of gloom, too. To some, doubtless, the North was always the land of their exile. One of them wrote: "Count no man happy whose life is lived upon this bay." The isolation, the long cold with a blank world stretching four ways, were hard tests; and not every man who came out "from home" could meet them. There is no intent, here, to paint a rosy picture. To men, who possessed the qualities for success in that life, it was the good life. A sound body was important: the essentials were energy, industry, an intelligent interest in what was at hand, instead of regrets over what was not, and the true pioneer spirit, eagerly learning a strange lore as one means toward mastering a new world. These essentials were exemplified in Henry Kelsey, the first of the Brahmins.



CHAPTER XII

THE SPOILS FOUGHT FOR

THE Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 left the French Compagnie du Nord in possession of York Factory. The Hudson's Bay Company held only the Albany Post on James Bay, which they had re-captured in 1693. It is possible that York on the Hayes was worth all the other posts on Hudson Bay. The mouths of the Hayes and the Nelson are within easy walking distance of each other; both are long rivers, navigable for canoes throughout; round their headwaters are chains of lakes and streams with short portages, so that in those days, when the Indian and the beaver were supreme in the northern interior of the continent, these two rivers drained an immense fur region. In June, the canoes began to arrive with furs. Some of them had been twenty days or more on the way. Before the end

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of July six or seven hundred canoes had come down the rivers and a thousand to fifteen hundred Indians had traded their furs at York Factory and departed with their goods. In years when the red man's midsummer madness, war, gripped him the fur fleet would be smaller. The Company's servants on the bay used the whole weight of their influence for peace among the tribes; as the *coureurs-de-bois* did in New France. Every fur trader's twin dreams were perfect peace among Indians, and no rivals: and he labored hard and wrought subtly to convert both into realities.

Besides furs, the Indians brought fresh meat; and they informed the white men about the good hunting grounds nearby. The flats about the rivers' mouths were the spring home of countless geese and ducks. Throughout the year ptarmigan and rabbits were plentiful. The Indians also traded the down of ducks and geese; and princes and lords in England slept on comfortable mattresses. Twice a year great herds of caribou passed, then as now. Beaver, marten, otter, foxes, the favorite pelts, were at their best in the bay region, being exceptionally thick and glossy. "Black marten" became, in time, "Hudson Bay sable" and the humble muskrat, who left the Indian's traps not much esteemed, emerged from the London dye pot a "Hudson seal." "Black beavers" were very rare and immensely valuable; a dozen in one season was a good catch. Brown beaver was the staple of the Fur Trade; and for the hat trade, the best paying fur was beaver which the Indians had worn—for instance, their large winter blankets,—and which had become well greased and glossy. Ermine, silver foxes and the rarer black foxes, both very costly furs—a natural black fox may be called priceless—were caught by

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the Company's Indians; and sometimes a white fox was mentioned in the clerk's tally, but that fur had not yet come into vogue, at least in England. "Told the Beaver out of ye trading room into ye warehouse" Herbert Kelsey at York records monotonously through the month of June, noting also the daily arrival of Indian trappers and occasionally stating their numbers—forty-seven "Cannoes," on one day.

Other furs, which the Indians brought to the bay posts, and which still hold their place in the trade, were mink, fisher, wolverene, skunk, lynx, wolf, red and cross foxes and bear. These animals, with the big game of the continent, and its salt and fresh water fish, had always been the Indian's economic resources, provided his food, clothing and house walls, his thread for sewing and many of his tools and weapons. There was an intertribal trade in fish, hides and fur long before the Cabots caught cod on the Banks, or a Norman fisherman made the trade of his knife for a beaver pelt with a copper-hued stranger on the Atlantic shore of Canada. But, to the Indian, the animals which shared his wild country with him were more than food and commerce. They, too, were "people," with distinct national characteristics, like Indian tribes. Most of them were his friends; such as the Beaver People, the Deer People, and Black Bear Person. He knew their minds and their ways. His children played with their young. A romping black cub on a buckskin leash was no novelty in camp; nor a young beaver waddling in from the pond at sunset to share its child-friend's night blanket.

Some of the other Forest People he did not know so well: Mink and Fisher and, particularly, Marten, shyest of all. If the Marten People were not greedy for trap bait,

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he might never see them. They lived in the darker depths of the forest. When he passed through, they were looking at him from the trees; but it was seldom that his glance turned swiftly enough to catch sight of a beautiful silky tail, almost black, or of a small, shy, dark pointed face lifted above an orange throat. During several seasons he would trap many in that forest: then, for a few years, none. Where did the Marten People go? Why did they come back? What were their thoughts, these mysterious beings who, like himself, mated, had progeny, hungered, were ruled by the rhythmic turn of the seasons, yet lived, invisible, among dark branches? He knew Fisher better, Marten's most dangerous enemy, more dangerous even than Lynx because he was smaller and swifter. Fisher, at his best, might be three feet long, black-coated, with a brown tinge or touched with silver, and wearing a long, beautiful, fluffy black tail; his skin was strong and durable. "Fisher" is only his nickname; he got it early in the trade because he loved the fish used as bait and was clever at picking it out of the mink traps in his district without being caught. He never fished in water! The Indian admired him because he was a good hunter as well as a lucky fisherman. As swift and skilful on the ground as in the trees, and apparently tireless, he ran down rabbits and foxes; and he has even been known to wear out and kill deer. So, unlike Marten, he was not afraid to let his human brother among the Forest People see him now and then; nor averse to startling an English apprentice, on his first jaunt into the woods, with the illusion of a huge black pussy cat stepping daintily over the snow.

The Beaver People were the Indian's closest friends; they gave him most. Their wonderful pelts kept him warm,

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their flesh was excellent eating, and they provided him with a substance which removed the man-smell from his traps. They typified wisdom and, in all his stories about them, he praised their sagacity. He bade his children consider the ways of Beaver and become wise. An Indian boy was going to school when he rose from under his bed-blanket on a moonlit night and slipped through the woods toward the creek and the sound of chopping. He must go at that time because the Beaver People did all their work at night. This Indian boy at school would note first that there were many of the wise people in this community, if much timber came floating down stream from their logging preserve. Because they were wise they always went up stream to log, and let the current bring down the timber—willow, poplar and birch—for their dam and houses. The boy knew that they did not build dams in ponds and lakes, because dams were not needed in deep water. Herein, so his father had told him, was the Beaver People's greatest wisdom: they knew that creeks had less water sometimes, and even went dry, because the heavy frosts froze the marshes which supplied them. So they erected dams to keep the water at the right depth. If the creek ran in leisurely fashion with an easy-going, ambling current, they built a nearly straight dam. But, if the current ran swiftly, they built a dam with a marked curve, the convex toward the current.

The Indian boy, watching, saw the swimmers come down among their logs and start building their dam, trimming off branches which interfered with good architecture, setting in the posts and laying the first timbers. He saw other beavers busy on the bank collecting mud and stones; their wet hairy bodies glistened faintly in the moonlight. When

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they had a good pile of their stones and mortar, they carried them in their odd, little, short front paws, holding them up against their necks, and worked them into the dam. Woodwork, masonry and plastering went on apace under the moon, every builder "busy as a beaver." The boy knew that no beaver used his tail as a trowel, because the joints of the tail made any such use of it impossible. The dam finished, they began upon their house with the same energy. A house of the Beaver People seemed a wonderful thing to the boy who was a tepee dweller, though he did not think it better than a house which could be carried about; at least, it would not be a better house for human beings, who must travel the game trails. But, as he watched it rounding up out of the silvery water, and heard no sound but its building and the stream singing about it, he remembered how the Father-of-all-Life had sent his messenger long ago to teach the Beaver People architecture, so that they could live comfortably and be protected from Wolverine Person. When winter froze the surface of the creek, Wolverine would come and try to get into the house. But the wise Beaver People always gave their houses another thick heavy plastering in autumn, knowing that the frosts would harden it. Wolverine would have his trouble for nothing! The house had walls within, making it several dwellings in one. Each apartment was a home. The boy might see the Beaver People on this night, or perhaps on another, digging caves in the walls of the bank, below water. These were for refuge if the house were attacked. This coming winter, the boy would join his father in a beaver hunt. They would kill beaver, not only by breaking into their houses, but by finding the caves where they had hidden when they saw that their house was doomed.

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The boy attending night school by the creek was learning wisdom and persistence from the Beaver People, and also how to observe and to make use of the gifts of Nature: he belonged to a northern tribe which cherished old tales about how a Beaver Person once taught these things to Men. It was this Beaver Person who told Men to watch Wolverine Person trying futilely to break through his thick frozen roof in winter. "In future," said he, wisely, "when winter comes, cache your goods in a hummock of ice and pour water over it and let it freeze."

The boy was learning courage, too, this night, which was as needful as Beaver's lessons to him, the hunter and warrior to be; for the black hours were the time of prowling beasts, and peril might meet him on the trail to the camp. As he stepped noiselessly along the edge of a low cut-bank, its slope massed with young greenery and fallen timber, a soft hoarse sound reached him, and he stopped, breathless.

"T'ch-t'sook-sook-sook."

In a hollow of the bank, behind the fallen timber, Black Bear Mother was talking to her cubs. The boy listened for a moment, with a strange feeling in his whole body. The black bear was the one animal he could never hunt; because there was a peculiar bond between them. When he was a new born baby his father had killed a she-bear and then, a few days later, found her lair in which lay two very young cubs. He would not kill the cubs, which were too small to be of any use as food or fur, nor leave them to die, which would be a very evil thing to do and would justly bring upon him the anger of all Bear Persons. So he brought them home and gave them to his wife. One died immediately, but the other, a female, lived; and the Indian

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mother suckled the little orphan of the Bear People with her own baby. The boy and his sister, the Bear Person, were nearly two years old when she went away suddenly one summer night. So it was that he could not hunt bears, but must always sing his magic bear-song to them to let them know who he was. Then they would go on their way and not hurt him. He could hear the mother bear, still clucking, grunting; and, at first, he was afraid, because he was a young boy, and he had never come near to a bear before nor sung his song to one. Now the time had come and he must sing it. The wood was very still and dark where he stood, but silver light fell through the gap in the trees, made by the gully, and slanted on the green boughs before her lair; it made a mysterious path where spirits of boys and bears might walk. The fear went and he felt the magic swelling his heart and making him strong, and he knew that this strength was the great love which had arisen between him and all Black Bear Persons. He had been told of it, he had known it would come, and now he felt it. So he stood there, not very high, for he was young, and his voice was light, like a child's, as he sang:

I am your Younger Brother.
Do you know the song I am singing?
For you I made this song
And for you I sing it.
I am your Younger Brother.

The mother and cubs in the lair were silent, but "his mind told him" that she listened; and, presently, he thought he heard her singing a song to him, because the words and the tune seemed to come into his ears. He went on home through a world which had become immense and strange,

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like a spirit-place; and he only knew that he had a body because his heart was so large.

The Indian loved laughter and play: and so he loved the Otter People, the little comedians of fur land. Wearing one of the handsomest and most valuable of fur coats, Otter could be seen any day leading his family out of their den, which was half under water that did not freeze over wholly in winter. Otter lived by falls, or rapids. Otter and family would be on their way to make a slide. In winter, with well-packed snow, the preparation of a good slide was an easy matter; but, in other seasons, it called for thought and labor. Otter must find a steep bank of good clayey soil, sloping to the water, of course, because the big splash at the end was an important part of the fun. Then he and his family must clear away stones, roots, bumps and whatnots for several feet across the bank, until their chute was clear of obstructions and broad enough to accommodate all of them. After a few plunges in the water had doused their fur thoroughly, the clay would become smooth and slippery from the pressure of their sliding, wet bodies; and Otter and Mrs. Otter and the four or five little Otters would romp all day, tobogganing, diving, playing tricks and upsetting one another. Pet otters were in many an Indian home. The Indian children knew that they were the most affectionate of all the wild creatures which their fathers, the hunters, brought to them. Besides, they were always doing something to make children laugh.

Respect and hate were the Indian's sentiments toward Wolverine Person and these have been the white trapper's sentiments too, ever since his earliest encounters with that malicious and uncanny prowler. Wolverine Person has the long slanting brow of a certain type of thinker—whom one

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instantly suspects of fanaticism—and the meanest eyes that ever looked out on the world, and on them who dwell therein, and saw them as meet only for destruction. Early carvers of religious woodcuts should have been acquainted with Wolverine Person: he is an allegorical beast. As such, he appears in many Indian tales. He is smaller than the common black bear, which he can kill, but immensely strong, with formidable claws and teeth. The Indian knew him to be fiercer toward man than any fur-bearing animal except, perhaps, Grizzly Bear. There was no comfort in the fact that he moved slowly: it was one reason why he preferred to attack when approached. The Indian could not retreat: he had to kill Wolverine, or he could do no trapping. In a night, Wolverine would make the round of the traps and devour whatever was in them, animals or plain bait, and wreck or carry off the traps. He soon learned to rob steel traps as successfully as he had robbed primitive dead-falls and snares made of saplings and caribou strings. The Indian feared him most because it was so difficult to hide a food cache from him. In time of scarcity the cache might mean life for the band of starving and weakened men returning from a long futile hunt. Wolverine, keen-nosed and an able climber, would devise a way to get the contents of any tree cache, unless some novel means of protection had been employed to scare him off.

While his cunning and his gluttony are troublesome enough now as of yore, he is the more disliked by the white trapper for his habits of destroying whatever food is left, after he has gorged himself, and of carrying off traps, kettles, guns, bedding, apparel, whatever he finds that is not edible, and burying them in the snow or pushing them

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into clumps of bushes. He will wreck any camp, given time. Usually he does not bury the loot near the spot where he discovers it. He carries it long distances. The warmth, durability and scarcity of wolverene fur make it very valuable. Northerners prefer it for hood trimmings and collars because it is the only fur which does not frost in winter from the wearer's breath. The markings resemble the skunk's, but the colors are a rich warm brown and a buff, or tawny white. Sixteen skins, including only the dark oval patch on the lower back with the darker tail, and a narrow edge of the light fur around each oval, the whole close-sewed with deer sinew, made a rug for bed, or sled, that was well-nigh priceless. The trader, who owned one, was a potentate: he was also warm, no weather could pierce it.

The foxes alone have contributed enormously to the profits of the Fur Trade. Red Fox, whose coloring varies from tawny to a brilliant bay, is an old intimate of the Indian, and the hero of many of his fables. The northern Indian knew, and told the white men, about Silver Fox and Black Fox who appeared, though rarely, among Red Fox's children. He knew the Cross Fox too; and that the Hudson Bay region, with its long cold, produced the best foxes. He knew that other animals than foxes sometimes wore unfamiliar garments; and he could recite thrilling bedtime stories to his children, telling why Ermine is white only during the winter, explaining the occasional masquerade of Marten in a white and orange coat, setting forth the "holy medicine" properties and good omens in the silvery pelt of White Beaver.

These Forest People were no less the Indian's friends because he killed them for his need. He maintained peace

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with their spirits by composing personal songs to them, and through tribal rituals. He judged them to be, like himself, chiefly concerned, not with the perishable body, but with the "holy mystery" of never-ending life apart from the body. As to his hunting, before the white traders came, he killed fewer animals yearly, in all likelihood, than were killed by other animals. Wolves slaughtered deer and moose in the timber. They followed hungrily along the edges of the caribou herds; as, farther west, they followed the buffalo and, in other regions of the north, the musk ox. In their wake the foxes travelled to devour the remnants of flesh and bones; and of the antlers, once the branching glory of the warring and mating caribou stags, or the crowns which the does wore till fawning. After the foxes followed an army of small rodents, mice, rats and lemmings. The young of the marten and the mink were the prey of the hawk and the horned owl: fishers and lynx killed many marten, and lynx killed fishers; mink were not the only enemies, only the chief enemies, of the muskrat; beaver were beset by wolverene, otter, bears, wolves, and lynx. Perhaps he felt his kinship with the Forest People the more strongly because death stalked him also. He was a warrior, with warlike foes of his own species lying in wait for him. He was a hunter whose primitive weapons sometimes failed to stop the furious onrush of Grizzly, or Moose, two of the Forest's strong and angry People. The elements could turn against him, storms swamp his canoe or the rapids, outwitting him, impale it on a rock; and there were years when famine walked, like a malign ghost, through the white woods and the bitter cold about his winter camp—the deer, his staple, having forsaken their accustomed place without warning.

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But, in fat or lean years, all his waking hours until death-closed his eyes, he had one possession, which was dear to him beyond what we call "price." This was beauty. Nature, his home, was beautiful: water, winds, shadows and lights made its beauty varied and rhythmic. He moved with it on its running streams, through its swaying, singing trees: his bodily motions were a part of that rhythm which his eyes saw and his ears heard; and his body was beautiful in color and form and in grace and power, it was poised and swift. Beyond this known beauty and rhythm was a vaster: he studied its symbols in the sky. Perceiving, in a sense, the eternality of beauty, he looked upon death as another winter, a strange, but a passing, sleep. His consciousness was continuously impressed by visible beauty, and it was natural that he should look to a beautiful future state. His Hereafter was the Star Trail. Out of the black night among the trees, he looked up at the long shining mass of the Milky Way and saw there the dead of his race as beauty flowering above darkness. It was his custom to make a song with which to meet death when it should come to him—in war, or peril of the hunt, or on his sick bed. Singing it, he would pass victoriously through the white change, without fear of it, or grief at leaving his friends. Alone in the forest, or out on the water, listening and praying, the young man sought for the rhythm on which, one day in the future, he would pass singing from the visible world. As he began to hear it, he chanted it aloud and melody came, and words. He learned the song and kept it against the day of death. This is a northern warrior's death-song:—

Great Spirit, Thou knowest me,
The sun, the moon, the earth, the day, the night.

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Tell me if this be true,
This life I have lived;
Tell me if this be true,
This death I am dying.

Ah! the clouds are moving away
From my tepee door,
The outward trail is no longer dark:
Now I see—I understand.
This life I have lived was nothing
This death I am dying is nothing:
There is no life, there is no death.
There was only beauty behind me,
Only beauty is before me;
I shall walk on the Trail of Stars.

The Indian made songs about everything. Poetry was native speech. The Indian woman also spoke it. There is an innocent gaiety in a song about fireflies, which seems to declare its author a young girl.

Wave little stars about my bed!
Weave little stars into my sleep!
Come, little dancing white-fire bug,
Come, little flitting white-fire beast!
Light me with your white-flame magic,
Your little star-torch.

And it seems to be a woman, standing in the door of her tepee and looking over the plain on a mellow day, who sings this Spring Song—

As my eyes search the prairie,
I feel the summer in the spring.

Summer and wild roses follow spring; and a girl sings, proudly equettishly, looking anywhere but at the man she challenges,

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What are you saying to me?
I am arrayed like the roses
And beautiful as they!

War songs and hunting songs, and generally canoe songs too, belonged to the men. They made arrows and sang arrow-songs.

The strength of iron
Has entered into my arrow point,
A spirit I could kill!

They danced in imitation of the movements of the buffalo herds, and stamped and shouted to the rhythm of the drums: "Strike ye our land with curved horns!" It was they who danced in the dread ritual before taking the war path, and chanted, while the drums rolled out fury:—

There under the earth, where the black war clubs
Shall be moving about like ball sticks in the game,
There their souls shall be, never to reappear:
~~We cause it to be so.~~
There under the earth the black war club
And the black fog have come together as one
For their covering.
The black fog shall never be lifted from them:
We cause it to be so.

Poet, painter, melodist: the Indian seems to have been these as naturally as he was hunter and warrior. His literary achievement was notable. There is form in his man-agement of the wide, resurgent rhythms, which he plucked from the moving clouds and the motions of a thousand antlers over the grazing ground; and in his arrangement of the whisperings of breeze-blown leaves and little streams, and of the silent fluttering of butterflies. His imagery is perfect: it embodies keen observation in concise expres-

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sion. Any one who has seen the last rays of afternoon, in rarefied air, break into a myriad golden particles, will acknowledge the harmony of visible object and poetic image in this line: "the pollen of evening light on my trail."

In the material things of wilderness life, the white man accepted the Indian as his teacher. But apparently it did not occur to the traders, and later the settlers, to regard the Indian as a teacher of literature or theology. Yet he had noble ideas to contribute to both departments of study. None of the attempts at verse to be found in early diaries show the least awareness of a rhythm not enslaved by metre. Rhymed couplets were the favorite medium. An amusing and dreadful example is young Henry Kelsey's attempt to tell the story of his journey from York Factory to the Manitoba prairies, in couplets: the spirit of the great tale is never able to unite with the form. Before his time, there was a Lenapi who told of the long journey of his people from the north to their Delaware home—

At this northern place they speak favorably
Of mild cool lands .
With many deer and buffalo.
Over the sea, the frozen sea
They went to enjoy it.
On the wonderful slippery water,
On the stone-hard water, all went.
Ten thousand at night
All in one night,
They walk and walk, all of them.
They all come, they halt at the land of the spruce pines.

The Indian's religious conception of himself in relation to the Invisible Holiness, however tribally called—Above-All-High, All-Encompassing Supreme One, Great Mystery, Great Medicine—is not understood, but lost, by attempts

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to draw analogies from the non-Christian theologies of the Orient, or of ancient Greece and Rome. India and Persia are civilizations, so were Greece and Rome; the North American Indian is a primitive. He was a crude astronomer, guiding his night travels by the stars; but he was not an astrologer. He knew nothing of the Fates. He never remotely glimpsed an Olympus, nor a Venus. His religious concepts cannot properly be called erotic, though he composed rituals honoring fruition and fructification. Unlike the civilized orientals, and the Christian mystics of a few centuries ago, he did not express religious faith in the language of passion—he was not an ascetic. On occasion, he abstained from all family intercourse; as the Cherokee, for instance, during preparation for war, and the young men seeking visions and guardian spirits. This abstention was temporary, like fasting, a means to an end, and was not based on the ascetic ideal, with its conviction of sin in the body and its consequent need to suppress natural emotions, or to convert them through sublimation into religious ardors. He was a primitive and he was innocent of the knowledge of sin, and the religious mysticism of civilized persons is far too complicated for him ever to have evolved it, or understood it. When he sang love songs, he was addressing a desired human being of the opposite sex: he was not being “mystic.” The Indian had no god, much less gods, as civilized pagans conceived of gods. His Above-All-High was impersonal, never embodied, save as all Creation embodied “him”; for “he” was above, about, and in all visible things—stars, men, beaver and blades of grass. Therefore the warrior sings: “Thou knowest me, the sun, the moon, the earth, the day, the night.” We have only a few fragments of the red man’s religious history

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and philosophy; because he hid his sacred things from the white stranger with whom he so willingly shared his material possessions. The white men who learned most about the inner meanings of the Indian's devotional practices were those traders who married Indian wives, or who lived among Indians for a part of each year over a long period of time and who were fully trusted by them. A few of these traders wrote down what they saw and heard, but if they did not tell other white men, nor publish these accounts, it was probably because they did not care to be mocked at, as credulous fools. We know about certain ceremonials, dances, customs and symbols, but we know practically nothing which can explain individual experiences: such as those of the famous Canadian Blackfeet priest, Wolf Head, and of the Sioux, Chief Crazy Horse; and the extraordinary visions of many other wilderness prophets. Or, to turn to a less spectacular form of spiritual experience, we are ignorant of the primitive's gift for pure exaltation—transcending the flesh without condemning it—which lies behind the Lillooet's declaration of his identity with his spiritual Creator:—

Every look of mine this day shall be a look of Thine,
For I must wear Thy face:
Every word shall be a word of Thine,
For I can speak no words but Thine.

There were lesser powers in the world unseen. Some were evil and must be watched, and balked; but they had no final word to say about anything. The canoeman threw tobacco to the evil spirit of a whirlpool as he sped by; he dealt, by some such method, with the bad djinns of mountain and forest. These evil spirits appear to have been the American kith of the trolls and malicious gnomes who in-

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habited the mountains and forests due south of the tribal republic of Valhalla, rather than of anybody living on the banks of Indus or Styx, or haunting Jordan.

All tribes were on the same general plane of culture, though some were more advanced than others. The Iroquois, the Cherokees, the Pueblos, and the Tsimshians of British Columbia, for instance, had progressed furthest toward a civilization; they built houses. But the Blackfeet, the Sioux, the Crees, who were nomads, were not less intelligent and efficient in their own environment. It is a mistake to think of the red man as childish, or childlike: he was not like any child we know. He was a highly intelligent adult, living in a primitive world, which contained none of the made objects which, with their uses, so largely form a white child's mental realm. He was more nearly master of his primitive material world than we are of our more complex one. And his life of simplicity, intelligently lived, may have made him freer spiritually than we are. The differences were large between certain tribes, whose environments were similar; for instance, between the aristocrats of the Northwest, the Blackfeet Confederacy, with their high code and their elaborate social system, and the wild Chipewyans who seemed only a step removed from the four-footed People, and whose women would nurse young bears; between the Pueblos and the dull Diggers, between the Iroquois and the Hurons. In discussing the red race and its conceptions of life, the world and deity, it is necessary to remember that a generalization on resemblances must ignore many specific points of unlikeness. Differences in customs, in ritualistic detail, like differences in speech, were as many as the tribes. But, whatever the external dissimilarities, the Indian's religion was based on

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a few elemental ideas which, for him, contained the essence of the all-important matter of his relationship with all other visible life, and of his continuous identity with his spiritual source. He had a lively dramatic sense and he composed rituals calling for dignified pageantry and a variety of costuming, painting of face and body, and symbols to be worn and carried; but the meanings were simple.

The spoils which the white traders fought for were, first, the furs of the Indian's forest. For these alone English and French battled on Hudson Bay. To the south, the competition of traders for furs inevitably led to the wars of kings for territory; and the trader's trace became the path of armies and of settlers. Lastly, the settlers battled with the red men. The spoils fought for included all that the Indian owned; and his natural and primal right to live. We see the Indian first as a giant figure dominating the scene, dwarfing the little forts in which white men burrowed and waited fearfully to learn if he would trade with them. Yet, already, when he stood as lord of the land before the first trading post, night was upon his shoulder. In a few years, comparatively speaking, he would be gone from his old ways of earth. But the Star Trail, burning luminously across the darkness which hung about him, testified of the spiritual eternality of his race. Today again, civilized men—not traders now, but artists and art lovers, coming a few at a time, like the earliest traders—turn to him for his riches: for his bold imaginative sense of color and form, which yet remained based in truth, and the harmonizing and unifying rhythm which he drew from the motions and sounds of his large primeval world. His faith is justified, that saw the joyous dead on the Trail of Stars helping to brighten the night for their friends below.



CHAPTER XIII

BEAVER SETS THE SOUTHERN STAGE

HERE the story of Beaver moves on in a new setting, in what are now These States, and chiefly in the South. For a moment, let us glance backward, to the story's beginning, that its later action may be clearer.

The French built their first trading post on the St. Lawrence in 1600, at Tadoussac. Seventy years later, in 1670, the year when Charleston was founded, Charles II granted a charter to the "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay," who became popularly known as the "Hudson's Bay Company"; and this is the title of the organization today. It may be stated, emphatically, that the apostrophe-s is necessary to correct printing of the name; and also that the Adventurers of England were never called "Gentle-

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men-Adventurers," a wholly erroneous term which has appeared in several modern books. England has always produced adventurous men in plenty, as the British Empire bears witness, and, again witness the Empire, men who were practical as well as adventurous; far too practical to handicap themselves, before setting out, with so idealistic a hyphenate. During the seven decades between Tadoussac in Quebec and Rupert House on James Bay, Englishmen founded colonies in Virginia and in New England and acquired the Dutch plantation on the Hudson. By 1670 the one deer and the few beaver pelts, sent by Chief Powhatan as a present to the Governor of Virginia had been followed into the colony by many others. Settlers pushing into the back country had become hunters and, in a lesser degree, trappers. Not only was the Indian's food, venison, their meat but they had also adopted the Indian's dress and they needed the materials for it. There were men on the frontiers, who preferred business to farming and enjoyed travel besides, and these had become "Indian Traders." Several of them went yearly with their pack horses to do business with the tribes along the rivers of Virginia; others traded in North Carolina with the Siouan Catawbias and with the Iroquoian Tuscaroras. Among these tribes of the back country they heard of another, a great nation, situated partly within the western mountains and partly on the other side, the Cherokees.

Maryland traders were bartering with the Susquehannocks along the Susquehanna. These Indians, like the Cherokees and Tuscaroras, were an Iroquoian people. They had broken away from the Mohawks, the oldest of the Five Nations, a long time before the advent of white men. At least, the Mohawks said so, and spoke of them as "our

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children"; but the children had struck hands with the Hurons and, partly for this reason, the Senecas pursued a relentless war against them. At first, the Marylanders supplied the Susquehannocks with ammunition and aided them against the Senecas; but "frontier trouble," a commonplace of the westward push, developed and then they allied themselves with the Senecas to crush the Susquehannocks. Throughout the war, or series of wars, the Mohawks made pleas to Governor Andros of New York on behalf of "our children," saying that, if the children would come home, they would protect them. Andros, anxious to oblige his powerful allies, exchanged notes with the Governor of Maryland. He was willing to receive the Susquehannocks into his territory, feeling that he could trust the Mohawks to fulfil their promise: and he pointed out that Maryland frontier settlers would then be safe, because the Senecas would be satisfied in achieving their chief objective, which was control of the large fur country along the Susquehanna. But the children would not come home and, by 1676, the Senecas had reduced this once large tribe to a few hundred souls, whom they divided and forced to dwell where they could oversee them.

Terror of the powerful Iroquois Confederacy was in every Indian heart throughout the eastern woodlands. With this horrible object lesson before the tribes, the Five Nations were able the more easily to make treaties and to establish their authority. About the beginning of the eighteenth century their power lay on the land like two long arrows, the shafts together on the bent bow of Oneida Lake and the stems parted: one dart flew over the southward country east of the Appalachians into North Caro-

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lina, and the other on the western side of the mountains into Tennessee.

Tracing Indian history is little more than a forlorn attempt; there are too many gaps. It seems reasonable to suppose that the Five Nations established their feudal claims to Kentucky about this time, through their agreements with the Cherokees. However, it may have been much earlier, because they had long been thoroughly familiar with the territory semi-circled by their Beautiful River. The Iroquois were the greatest travellers south of the Cree country. Iroquois canoes bore La Salle down the Ohio to the falls: his discovery of the Ohio river, like nearly all the discoveries by white explorers in North America, coming about because friendly Indians took a white man to look at the thing which they had described to him. If some of the Five Nations' southern alliances were already in process of formation before their treaty with New France, they at least used the years of French peace to crush recalcitrant Iroquoian people and to strengthen their bonds with others. "*Tenagouichka!*" was not heard at the gates of Montreal, but it echoed in Cumberland Gap and across Chesapeake Bay. They claimed supreme power over Kentucky, regarding the rights of the Cherokees as merely those of vassals. At their instigation perhaps, certainly with their consent, Kentucky, which included the north-eastern part of Tennessee, was set aside as a hunting preserve. It was closed to settlement; no tribe could build solid house walls on its wild pastures. There buffalo congregated in large numbers, feeding on the luscious grass and wallowing about the Licks: deer were also plentiful, and turkeys and pigeons darkened the sky. Kentucky produced a great part of the food of those tribes,

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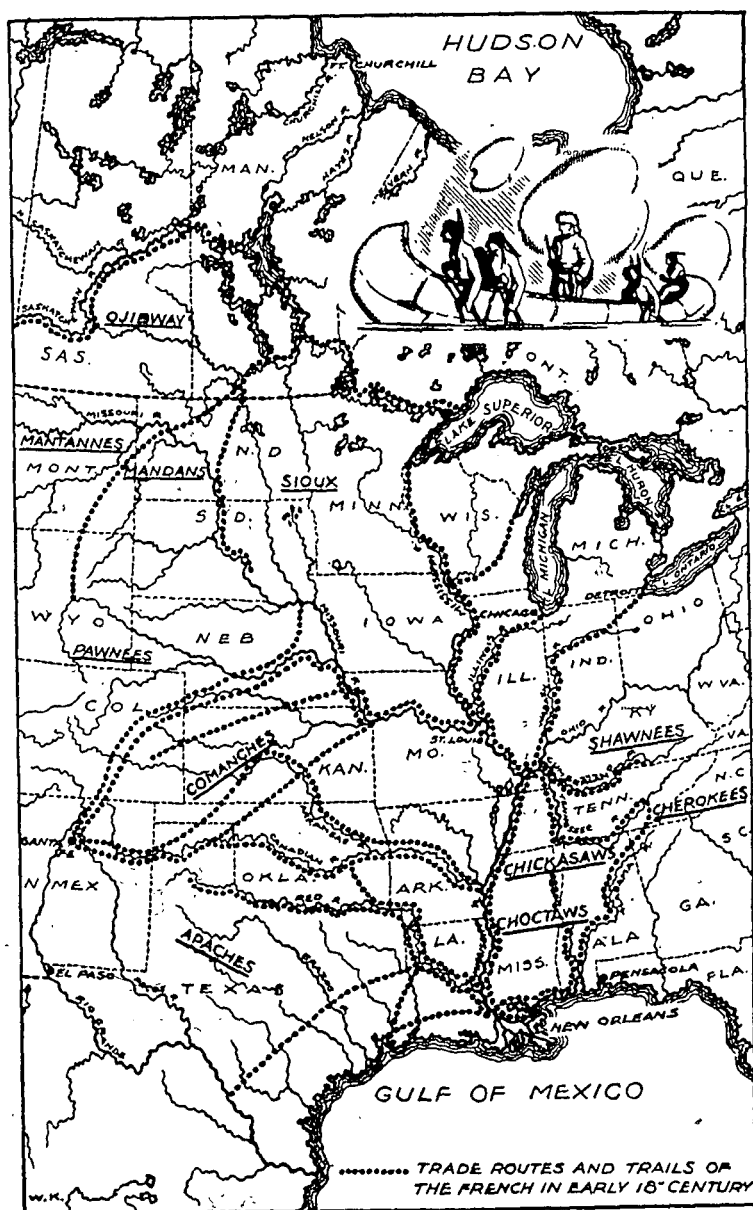
which sent hunters there in late summer and autumn: the principal tribes were the Cherokees and the Chickasaws of Tennessee, each able to muster about six thousand warriors, the redoubtable Shawnees and Miamis from north of the Ohio, whose chief towns were on the Little Miami and Scioto rivers, and on Yellow creek; and the Iroquois, whose messengers sometimes came down to combine hunting with political business or warfare. Kentucky—in the Iroquois, *Ken-ta-ke*, meaning “Beloved Old Fields”—was also the war trail of tribes going north, or south, to attack their foes: it was the “Dark and Bloody Ground” long before white men tried to settle it. The southern limits of Iroquoian domination west of the Appalachians were the Cherokee towns not far from the present Loudon, Tennessee, although their influence reached farther. The largest town was Great Tellico and the oldest was Chota, the “Beloved Old.” The Chickasaws, whose chief towns were near the site of Memphis, were not of Iroquoian but of Muskogian stock. So were the Choctaws in Mississippi, who were, and still are, a large nation, and the Creek Confederacy, or Muskogee, in Alabama and Georgia, whose fighting strength was not less than four thousand men. Muskogee was the name given to the Creeks, or probably their brook-laced country, by the Algonkins who came into it with the French. Like the Cree word “muskeg,” it is descriptive of watered ground. The Creeks’ own name for themselves signified many scalps at the base of the war pole.

The settlers in the southern seaboard colonies were slowly moving westward toward the mountains, toward the passes in the mountains, which led into the common hunting ground and into the habitat of these large nations.

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Wherever the settlers went, into the Indian domains of the back country, they were following the traders; and often the traders helped them negotiate with the Indians for their holdings. The trader of the southern colonies took a leading part in the settlement of the back country: he opened the way for the cabin-builders. This was a new rôle for the fur trader: he did not play it on Hudson Bay where, of course, colonization was not thought of, nor in New France where he would have preferred it to be forgotten. Colonial records include a number of instances like that of the peaceful settlement of a body of Scotch Highlanders on Cape Fear river in 1729; the Indians welcoming them because their favorite trader, one William Bull, had won their trust twenty years before, induced them to make a treaty with his nation and convinced them, by his own conduct through the years, that all men of his race were good. Southern records reveal the trader not only as the settlers' trail-maker but as their protector. In 1702 the Spanish in Florida, probably aided by the French of Louisiana, marshalled nine hundred Indians for the purpose of exterminating the English settlements in South Carolina. The Creeks got wind of the plot from French traders in Alabama and they informed their friends, the Charleston traders, and offered to help. The traders hastened out with five hundred Creeks, ambushed the Spanish and their Indians, and put them to rout. The Spanish were more successful in 1715, when they incited the Yama-see to massacre the frontier settlers in South Carolina: the traders heard of this plot only in time to warn a few of the settlements to prepare to defend themselves.

The story of colonial settlement begins with Indian treaties and presently brings Indian wars upon the page.



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Indians were hospitable and it was a tenet of their moral code not to turn the poor away from food and shelter. They saw the first little groups of white pioneers as weak and poor people with no homes of their own; and who asked the red people, in their need, for the first and sacred right, life. But presently more came, and yet more, and their houses and farms spread out on the hunting pasture; and the wild game, which was the Indian's food, grew scarce and he and his children hungered. The people whom he had protected, as he saw it, now threatened him with extinction. So he made war on them. This is what happened when the Tuscaroras began to raid the settlements in their section of North Carolina early in the eighteenth century. There was no pacifying them except by bullets. Again the Five Nations pleaded with the white rulers for a tribe of their stock, and the greater part of the Tuscaroras migrated to the towns on Oneida Lake. Thereafter the Iroquois of New York were known as the Six Nations. In spite of the Fur Trade, with its wrecking influence on the Great League and the many more wars it inspired, the Five Nations apparently were still trying to build up a firm and stable power in their chosen dwelling place where the faint gleams of a vision of home and civilization, of government and the arts of peace, had come to them.

While plow and axe were moving slowly westward along the southern beaver trails, the French built forts beyond the mountains and established colonies in what are now Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana: the Swedes took a brief tenure of Delaware, their rights passing first to the Dutch and then, with the fall of New Netherland, to the English in 1666. In the West, in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois, the Jesuit missionaries were the

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first French residents and sometimes the first explorers. Avid for souls, they dared alike the known perils and what dangers might be shrouded from them: the names of Brébeuf, Jogues, Hennepin, Lalemant, De Nouë, de Galinée, Marquette, to mention only a few, echo out of the past as if great bells had chimed for courage, faith and single purpose in the depth of the forest that is no more. In courage, at least, the *coureurs-de-bois* avid, on their part, for beaver and freedom, could compare with the missionaries. Nicolas Perrot in 1685 began a chain of forts in Wisconsin on the upper Mississippi and built a trading post at Galena, Illinois. By 1720 his successors had established a post on Pepin Lake and permanent military stations at Chequamegon, and also at Green Bay where Champlain's emissary to the Great Khan, Jean Nicolet, put on his damask. La Salle built a fort at the mouth of the St. Joseph river in Michigan in 1679: in 1701 Antoine de La Mothe-Cadillac, whose fame now travels the world in a motor car, founded Detroit. Greysolon Dûluht explored Minnesota and set up French arms in a large Sioux village in 1679; and, by 1700, forts had been erected on Prairie Island and at the confluence of the Blue Earth and Le Sueur rivers. In 1720 the French built Fort Orleans on the Missouri and in 1735, Fort Geneviève, by which date the river was known to their *voyageurs* for several hundred miles above its mouth. Between 1719 and 1725 French posts were built in Kansas, on the Kansas and the Arkansas. Tonty had built his fort at Arkansas Post in Arkansas in 1686; later, posts were built on the Red and the Osage.

These western posts were still a long way from the English settlements of the Old South and from the activities of the southern traders. But the Louisiana posts were not.

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The same Iberville, who had already annoyed English traders in the far North, founded the French colony of Louisiana during the last half dozen years of his life, from 1699—two years after his naval battle on Hudson Bay—to 1706. He left his work to his brother, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, then twenty-six years old. Of the brothers, who had shared in his northern exploits, Sérigny, still commanding the *Palmier*, accompanied him to Louisiana: the others were dead. The youthful Chateauguay fell at the taking of York Factory in 1694, Ste Helène was killed during the English attack on Quebec in 1690, Maricourt died in 1704 as a result of his hardships and wounds during a campaign against the Iroquois. It need not be supposed that the Spanish in Mexico were any better pleased about the entry of Iberville than they had been about La Salle in Texas, or Chief Jarri. But their hands were tied by events abroad. Their King in Spain died without a son and bequeathed his crown to his grand-nephew, the Duke of Anjou, who was also the grandson of Louis XIV. The new king, Philip V, was French by blood, education and sympathies; and he believed that his wise old grandfather was giving him very good advice when he counseled him to agree to the French settlement of Louisiana as a protection for Spain's possessions against the English menace. The War Council in Spain protested and were sharply censured for it by their new King. So Mexican swords rested unwillingly in their scabbards while Iberville landed colonists. It was not till 1718 that Mexico sent a strong body of settlers, priests and soldiers into Texas to build and plant. They set up a church, a presidio and houses at San Antonio, three months before Bienville founded New Orleans. Until that time Bienville had been

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busy building posts among the Choctaws and establishing Jesuit missions there and in the Creek towns.

Iberville's Louisiana was a savage hero's dream. He knew La Salle's ideas, and added something to them. With the Mississippi bringing to the new colony the furs of the vast West, out of the mouths of its tributaries, and also the deer, beaver and marten, which thronged the woods on its eastern bank, Louisiana would soon be richer than Canada. In a short time the four large Indian nations to the east of the river, the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Cherokees, would be allies of Louisiana. By these alliances he and his successors would first put an end to the barter with the English traders: later they would bring a great army of red warriors down on the English colonies and extirpate them from the soil. Then Louisiana's eastern border would be the Atlantic sands, and its northern boundary New France. He sent Tonty Iron Hand to bring chiefs of the Creeks, Choctaws and Chickasaws to a conference and spoke well of Frenchmen and ill of Englishmen, smoked and listened to oratory. Matters seemed to be progressing. Soon after, during the war of the Spanish Succession, he sailed for Cuba to aid in organizing a joint Spanish and French naval expedition against Charleston. He fell ill of a tropical fever and died in Havana. His policy continued; but it was never to achieve success. Two factors operated for its defeat, apart from the difficulty of linking Indian tribes, with old arguments among themselves, into a permanent confederation. These factors were the goodwill of the Creeks and the Chickasaws toward the English traders, and the influence exerted over the Cherokees directly and, through them, on the Chickasaws, by the Five Nations, whose refrain, *"let the French have no*

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rest except in death," now referred to Iberville's colony as well as to Champlain's. Two years after Iberville's death, warriors of the Cherokee, Catawba, Creek and Chickasaw nations made an unsuccessful attack on the Louisiana forts. The raid may have been inspired by the English traders or by the Iroquois; or they may have shared the responsibility.

The plan bequeathed by Iberville, to his brother, Bienville, for breaking the entente between their nearest neighbors, the Alabama Indians, and the Charleston traders was moving, only slowly, when it was stopped by a war between France and Spain, in 1719. Immediately the French in the southern wilderness concentrated on capturing the Spanish possessions. An army, composed largely of *coureurs-de-bois* and led by Bienville, burned Pensacola: other fighting trappers drove the Spanish garrison in Texas behind San Antonio's ramparts and tried, and failed, to take possession of Matagorda Bay. The French objectives included the possession of both banks of the Rio Grande and the establishment of French posts for trade in Texas, Coahuila and New Mexico; but, like many ends sought in America in those days, it came to nothing, because of the politics of royalty in Europe. The two kings signed a peace.

The reverberations of this brief conflict rolled so far to the westward, over Nebraska, Colorado, and New Mexico, against the walls of Santa Fé, that to think of their scope thrills, like the thought of Champlain among the Hurons, fingering a buffalo hide. Santa Fé heard a frenzied rumor from Mexico to the effect that the French were on their way to establish a colony somewhere on Platte river. A military expedition was despatched at once with orders to

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make treaties with the tribes to the northeast, plant a colony at El Cuartelejo in Colorado, and to find and overthrow the French colony. The expedition marched first to the North Platte and hunted along its banks for the French. Not finding them there, it went to the South Platte where it was attacked and almost wiped out by Indians armed with French weapons, which must have been passed to them in their barter with friendly tribes to the east. Among these native warriors of Colorado were a number of Indians from Wisconsin, who may have been acting as instructors in the use of the new armament. So far had French influence preceded Frenchmen on the trail to the great West.

Frenchmen were eager to follow. Though the terms of peace restored to each nation whatever acreage had changed hands in the war, and good Frenchmen were supposed thereafter to respect Spanish laws and monopolies, the *coureurs-de-bois* desired to trade in Texas, in Mexico and in Santa Fé and the *voyageurs* were eager to rehearse their paddle songs on new rivers. These skilful and daring travellers would not have been stopped by Spanish garrisons alone; they would have slipped by them, unseen. The obstacle was the almost continuous warfare of the southwestern tribes; in particular, the Comanches and Apaches. The French rovers relied on the natives to guide them in all their excursions; unlike the Spanish, who explored clumsily, with armies, and presently were either in an Indian war, or bothered about finding food for a hundred horsemen and their mounts, to say nothing of pack-boys and pack-horses, cooks, confessors and daybook writers. In this fashion León had made several excursions into Texas without learning a very great deal about it. By



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contrast, let us consider Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, admirably renamed Big Legs by the Indians, who is presented here merely as an example of the different methods of the *coureur-de-bois*. St. Denis wished to see Texas and also to find the secret gateway into Mexico. He set out from his post, Natitoches, with two companions and, when he was in the territory of hostile natives, he travelled at night with the stars for guide. He found Eagle Pass and knocked at the gate of the frontier post forty miles south of it, to the great consternation of the Mexican authorities. While they detained him there on various pretexts, debating among themselves what to do with him, Big Legs wooed and wedded Manuela Sánchez, the commandant's lovely granddaughter. The old hidalgo's pride could not suffer an imprisoned grandson-in-law; so Big Legs went free with his bride. St. Denis was a typical Canadian gentleman of his period and profession, and an army would only have hampered him.

There was truth in the boast that three Frenchmen in the wilderness were better than thirty Spaniards; mathematical truth, better precisely because they were three. In 1739 two brothers named Mallet, with a small band of Canadians and Indians, succeeded in slipping through the war zone of the Comanches and into the precincts of Santa Fé. They had guessed that the colonists as well as the Indians, who were allowed small choice as to goods and little say as to prices under government regulations, would be glad to trade with newcomers. They took up quarters, unostentatiously, in a little hamlet called Gracia Real, did a thriving business and departed safely with the good fruits of their smuggling. En route, the party separated. Half of them returned, by the way they had come, to New Or-

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leans; and the others struck out boldly northeastward, over new country, to the Illinois. There was much chuckling in Santo Fé by the happy and sinful purchasers of unlawful goods and, among themselves, they nicknamed little Gracia Real "Canada."

The Spanish war and sundry Indian troubles out of the way, the French in Louisiana again concentrated upon the trading situation among the Creeks, with whom English influence seemed to be growing stronger; and to cementing the relations which they had established with the Choctaws, who had no English affiliations. Though colonists were coming out and bride ships too, after Talon's fashion, the Fur Trade was the dominant interest with the authorities. Otherwise they might have closed Georgia's back door before Oglethorpe brought still another English colony to the southern seaboard. Their Fort Toulouse, near the junction of the Coosa and Talapoosa rivers, was little more than a trading post in the centre of the missions. The Charleston traders already had a post on the site of Augusta. The Georgians built Fort Okfuskee in Alabama, on the Tallapoosa, forty miles from Fort Toulouse, and presently persuaded the Creeks of that section to send away the Jesuit missionaries. So the French were deprived of the religious influence, which had helped them so much with the Indians in Canada. Only with the Choctaws and several less important tribes had they established a monopoly of the trade.

In the beaver countries traders, as well as Indians, used the strong, durable beaver-pelt in preference to deerskin for maps and records. Their records were largely about beaver—"told the Beaver out of ye trading-room into ye warehouse"—and their maps were of beaver trails and of

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posts for trading beaver: although there was much else in the way of archæology, sociology, geography, psychology and so forth, which might have been set down. The several other causes operative in colonization, and in conflicts among the French, English and Spanish, already fill many printed pages: and there are scores of paper maps showing the routes of "explorers" and the positions of "military" posts and settlements. Here we are examining the same trails, traced on a beaver skin, and reading the text from a beaver parchment.

The beaver map now included Pennsylvania. William Penn had made his first treaty with the Susquehannocks and Lenapis in the summer of 1683: the Susquehannocks were then ruled by a resident governor from the Five Nations. After the treaty, unarmed and without white men, he travelled with them through the woods and on the rivers of his new domain. Penn was a primitive himself, in the simple goodness of his character; he trusted the Indians and they trusted him, and their friendship endured. In an account of his first treaty, he wrote:

They speak little, but fervently and with elegance. I have never seen more natural sagacity, considering them without the help (I was going to say the spoil) of tradition: and he will deserve the name of wise who outwits them in any treaty about a thing they understand . . . Do not abuse them but *let them have justice and you win them.*

Pennsylvania, just and liberal, attracted many settlers, both well-to-do and poor. The former caused Philadelphia to grow rapidly and prosperously. The latter went out on the Indian border. A group of Welsh Quakers appear to have been the first border settlers. They were established at North Wales when three young English Quakers,

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Sarah, George and Squire Boone, arrived in Pennsylvania, in 1712, to spy out the land for their father, a Devonshire weaver. Germans and Scotch-Irish followed the Welsh. Some of the Germans went further, into Berks County; and many of the Ulster Scots went further yet, for the Fur Trade called louder than the plow to their restlessness and energy. In 1727 John Harris, one of them, built a trading post beyond the most westerly settlement, on the Susquehanna, where Harrisburg stands. Young Squire Boone married a Welsh girl, Sarah Morgan, and moved on to Reading. There his son, Daniel, was born, and grew to the age of sixteen, with Indians for his playfellows and his teachers. He was twelve when Squire gave him his first rifle and, the following spring, Daniel took his deer hides and furs to the Philadelphia market. Except for the intruding periods of the Seven Years War and the War of Independence, Daniel was a fur trader from his thirteenth year into old age. When he was eighty he went up from Booneville, Missouri, on a Long Hunt into the Yellowstone and brought back marten skins and buffalo hides.

There was great hunting in Pennsylvania. More and more "Irish Presbyterians" went out on the border, and pushed it farther westward. And more and more of them dropped the plow for the rifle and trap. The "Irish Traders" began to occupy space in the documents of the colony. Their trade with the Indians grew yearly. It reached the tribes of the Ohio Country, and a wealth of beaver was shipped to London from Philadelphia. Furs from Charleston and Philadelphia were certain to be discussed on any day when the Lords of Trade put on their beaver hats and drove through London's streets to their council chamber.



CHAPTER XIV

TRADER AND IMPERIAL SCOUT

NEITHER the Lords of Trade nor the colonial governors balked the able French from joining Louisiana to Canada by confederation of the western tribes. That honor belongs to the English colonial traders. Obviously, the Fur Trade in the colonies was not large enough to rival that of Hudson Bay or the St. Lawrence valley: but it was large enough to be the mainstay of South Carolina and Georgia, and of New York and Pennsylvania during the first half of the eighteenth century. Prices varied according to quality and to the demand. Generally, a deer skin sold for a dollar of our money; and a pack horse could carry a hundred dressed hides. Prime beaver; otter and marten, i.e. skins of the best quality and richest color, might fetch five dollars apiece or even a little more. Furs of less beauty brought

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as low prices as three and two dollars. Otter and marten were fancy furs and fetched more than any beaver but the finest.

Between 1732, when Georgia was founded, and 1740 the southern trade made strides: and each spring some six hundred traders brought their caravans into Charleston, their shipping point. Two of these Charleston traders claim our attention; Lachlan McGillivray and James Adair.

Lachlan McGillivray was a tall, brawny, red-headed Highland laddie of sixteen summers when he landed in Charleston in 1735 and attached himself to a trading caravan as a pack-boy. Within the next four or five years he married a Creek girl, daughter of a part-Spanish mother and a French father. He built a cabin in the Creek country and planted apple trees about it; and within the apple grove, and not in Charleston, was his centre of life. There was born his much beloved son, Alexander—destined to a dark repute in history. Lachlan was an astute trader and a man specially gifted to make his way among Indians. Shortly, in partnership with another trader, Henry Galphin, he had his own caravan, and a large trading house at Augusta, and his influence was supreme among the Creeks. He was a stumbling block to the French because no plot of theirs, involving that large nation, could really get under way before McGillivray heard of it, and then it ended. There are two ways in which the news might have reached him; one of them is at least a temptation to amusing speculation. Even those Indians about Fort Toulouse, bartering with the French, may have thought it best to hear first what the wise white Creek had to say before they acted on French suggestions: though the French would

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surely foresee that danger and guard against it. It is more likely that Mrs. McGillivray's mother, the French officer's wife, or other female relatives of mixed French or Spanish blood, came knocking on the young wife's door with the news. Indian women were the original American village gossips; and an Indian woman, who had something to tell, would think nothing of walking fifty miles to tell it. Whatever Lachlan learned of French intentions with regard to the Chickasaws and Cherokees, he communicated to Adair when they met in Charleston.

From 1735 to 1744 James Adair traded with the Cherokees, whose towns were in the present Monroe County, Tennessee. The trail was long from Charleston to Great Tellico, and it was dangerous enough, particularly in the Choctaw territory; but, save in war times, Adair brought his caravan into Charleston annually, for forty years. Serene, aware, taking perils, ill tricks of fortune and his own courage for granted, Adair crowded into those forty years the activities of a shrewd merchant, a colonial sentinel and an imperial scout, an explorer and a frontier soldier; and he also found time for the intellectual pleasures of a gentleman and a scholar. Fond of hunting, he generally reached Tellico in time for the latter part of the deer season. And to spend the mild winter in solitary exploration of the Appalachians or the Tennessee forests, observing vegetation, climate, soils and so forth, was an agreeable thing to do, for this inquiring and alert man, who always expected to cope successfully with whatever situation might arise. "I am well acquainted with near two thousand miles of the American continent," he says. Certainly he had hunted in the "old fields," as he writes it, many years before Boone's guide, John Findlay of Pennsylvania, was taken into Ken-

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tucky by Shawnee hunters, and he knew Cumberland Gap long before it was discovered and named by Thomas Walker.

In winters when he did not go exploring, Adair devoted himself to ethnological researches. A theory that the Indians were descendants of the lost tribes of Israel was intriguing educated missionaries and traders at that time. Adair was no stranger to Latin and Greek and the lore of the ancients; and he had taken up the study of Hebrew, hoping to discover resemblances between that language and Cherokee. He was already, like other early students, much impressed by certain likenesses in customs. But the pursuits of a scholar and an outdoor man did not prevent him from keeping an eye open for French emissaries among the Indians. He made bold to importune the Governor of South Carolina with his reports, begging for action. Nothing was done. Then occurred the mysterious and romantic affair of Christian Priber, who appeared among the Cherokees of Great Tellico, coming apparently from nowhere and with no object in mind except the aggrandizement of the Cherokee nation.

Who was this educated German stranger, Christian Priber, working subtly in the French interest in the heart of the wilderness? Adair describes him as "a gentleman of curious and speculative temper," who came to Tellico in the French employ. He soon acquired great influence over the minds of the Cherokees, and he used it to turn them against the English. Appointing himself their Secretary of State, he wrote letters to colonial governors and other persons of importance, couching impossible demands in insolent terms. Tart responses, refusing the demands, were just what he needed in Tellico! The colonial authorities

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became exasperated and made the mistake of sending a small band of soldiers, who were to cow the Cherokees into surrendering their "Beloved Man." The Cherokees were not cowed, they were disdainful. The soldiers went home without Priber, and English prestige in Tennessee suffered severely, in consequence. So shrewd a man as Priber was not long in taking Adair's measure. The conflict between two nations for control of six thousand Cherokee warriors became a battle in miniature, a duel between two men well matched. Adair lamented the situation because Priber was, like himself, a scholar. During slack winter days in Tellico they had quoted the classics to each other and compared their ethnological notes on the Cherokees. Priber was compiling a Cherokee dictionary, Adair an analysis of Cherokee beliefs and customs in the light of Leviticus. In the noble-kingdom of science, their comradeship had been inspiring. So Adair lamented, and kept his powder dry. He was at a disadvantage because he was absent for half the year and never knew what reception the Beloved Man's followers would give him when he returned. One well-aimed shot from ambush, on the trail, would serve, if it hit. He dodged several. However, the journeys to Charleston gave him opportunities to discuss the problem with a trustworthy man, such as Lachlan McGillivray. Since Governors were incompetent, traders must act; but how? The chance came when the Secretary of State in Tellico decided to make a tour of the southern nations with tempting inducements for alliance with the Cherokees. His plan of a great confederacy, by which he had finally won the chiefs of the three large divisions of the Cherokee nation, and which he was now ready to present to the Chickasaws and Choctaws, was copied undoubtedly

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from the political structure of the Five Nations. Priber was adroit. He had used an idea which the Cherokees could understand; and, in outlining the great powers which would be theirs, he had played deftly upon their pride and jealousy. Would they not rather head a mighty confederacy themselves than continue as vassals of the Iroquois?

Priber departed on his mission. Adair helpless, to all appearances, remained in Telliko. Priber's friends would not have allowed him to follow. Here details lack. Did some swift fearless Cherokee lad, of Adair's caravan, named Night Traveller perhaps—for this was a good name given to bold youths, fearless of darkness, and lighting their own way like the moon—outrun Priber and his convoy and bring word to the Creek cabin in the apple grove? This would be the most natural way for Lachlan to receive the news. However that may be, a band of Charleston traders captured Priber and possessed themselves of the mass of documents which he had intended for the French commandant at Fort Alabama. Lachlan did not trust his prisoner to the stupid Governor of South Carolina. He handed him over to the authorities of Georgia, who put him in prison and kept him there till his death. Adair, relating the affair, and remembering the Cherokee dictionary—the many nouns and verbs, suffixes, infixes carefully transcribed and revised through five years of labor—is pierced to the heart at the thought of such scientific treasures tossed and torn by some numbskull, or illiterate, in uniform. He records his fervent desire that Priber's manuscripts may “escape the despoiling hands of Military Power!”

Shortly after the Priber episode, and probably because of it, Adair left Great Telliko, and transferred his trade

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to the Chickasaw towns. His descriptions of these two tribes are valuable, because he lived among them in intimacy in the days when they were as yet hardly touched by the civilization which was to overcome them. He knew them in their primitive strength, when their psychology was still wholly Indian. The Cherokees used a trick of speech that sounds curiously English: sometimes they gave the word "old" the significance of "dear." Hence the old fields of Kentucky were really the Beloved Old Fields: ancient Chota was the Beloved Old Town; the aged women who took care of children—laying the little boys down for their day naps on the skins of mountain lions, so that they would grow up to be great warriors—were Beloved Old Women; and, of all the synonyms for truth, the Cherokee was the most beautiful for it placed it in the heart and mouth as a native and a long cherished possession—the Beloved Old Speech. Adair's statements have been criticized by some modern ethnologists; but, in reading the criticisms, we do well to remember that he lived with these Indians before white contact had changed them, a hundred and fifty years before our scientific men began their studies.

Adair was proud of his Indian title, "the English Chik-kasah." He married a "Chikkasah female, as great a princess as ever lived among the ancient Peruvians"; and he loved her red kinsmen, "a friendly and sagacious people" who, it seemed to him, contrasting their ways with the official pomp and artificial social customs which obsessed Charleston in his day, had rediscovered Eden through their own simplicity. For a man of his temperament, the complete lack of pretense was like a golden light on the

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landscape; showing him "all the needful things to make a reasonable life happy."

Adair had not yet finished with the French. Their Choctaw alliance was not only a menace to the southern colonies, it was a danger to the lives and goods of those traders who must pass through Choctaw territory. Several times Choctaws had waylaid Adair, himself, and caused him trouble. He knew that the Choctaw who could exhibit his scalp in a Louisiana fort would be well paid for it; and the knowledge made him both indignant and thoughtful. This tribe could muster over five thousand warriors, which would be far too many "French Indians" when the inevitable day of battle arrived. Adair determined to enter the Choctaw trade and to win some of the more powerful chiefs to the English cause. He would do this by bringing them better goods and paying more for their furs. The first problem was to avoid the French in the neighborhood and to get safely into the Choctaw towns with his caravan; afterwards, he would decide how to get safely out again. There was one chance in his favor, due to Indian character. In their encounters on the trail, when a band had attacked his caravan, they had been met by cool courage and accurate shooting: once, when he was alone, perhaps hunting in the old fields, some Choctaws had captured him, and he had outwitted them and gone free. Courage and craft, wilderness talents! the Choctaws admired him, therefore they would probably let him come in, and give themselves the pleasure of a brave and clever man's society for a few days before they murdered him, divided his packs among them and collected the bounty on his scalp. During those few days he expected to change their minds. "My usual good fortune" timed his entry into the village

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of the powerful chief, Red Shoe, just after the enforced departure of a French officer who had grievously offended in the matter of Red Shoe's favorite wife. Outraged hospitality, thirst for vengeance, excellent merchandise, improved prices for furs and deer hides, combined with the diplomatic talent of the man whom they already admired, brought Red Shoe's band into the English interest. The chief became his emissary to the other villages. On this, his first visit, Adair won away from the French nearly half the tribe. The blow to French prestige was not to be lightly borne; and it was not long before he was captured again, this time by French Choctaws under command of French officers. The Frenchmen stripped him of his clothes and weapons and confined him with "the Alabama garrison" with "double centries" to watch him, intending to send him to Mobile to be hanged; "but I doubted not of being able to extricate myself some way or other." Someone must have been tempted to carelessness at the last moment. An hour before Adair was to be put into the boat, he was off, naked and weaponless, dashing at top speed through the woods with the officers, "double centries" and a pack of French Choctaws after him; "*but my usual good fortune enabled me to leave them far enough behind.*"

The activities of McGillivray and Adair in the south were of a piece with those of George Croghan in Pennsylvania and William Johnson in New York. It is evident that there was some contact between the two northern men and Adair and it is almost certain that it was made through hunting parties in the Beloved Old Fields, where Croghan's Shawnee customers and Johnson's Seneca friends—if not his Mohawk relations by marriage—met Adair's Cherokees and Chickasaws. Croghan was possessed

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of great personal magnetism. He charmed his way out of many a trap. On the Pennsylvania border, he was called "King of Traders." Foes, white and red, went down before him. A contemporary describes him as a "Meer Idol among his Countrymen, the Irish Traders." Hearing that French emissaries had gone along the great river and through "The Ohio," of which western Pennsylvania was then considered a part, bestowing gifts and making treaties, Croghan set out to follow their trail. The dangers were so great that it is trite to say he bore his life in his hand. He was a marked man. The French knew his quality. They had warned the Indians that he was an enemy of all French and of all French Indians. Yet, King Croghan would walk into a camp where several score of young warriors had streaked their faces with the black war paint, and were ready to pounce on an English trading post, or to attack English allies among the tribes; and he would presently be sniffing deer which the women were roasting for him while the young braves, their faces washed, lolled around him on the bank, some of them laughing and exchanging good stories with him, others melting the French king's medals for bullets. His trip completed, he wrote jubilantly to a friend that he had induced "All-most all ye Ingans in ye woods" to declare against the French.

7 In view of the long friendship between the English and the Five Nations, it might be thought that William Johnson had little to do in the Mohawk valley. On the contrary, but for him the French must almost certainly have won the Iroquois Confederacy or divided it as Adair had divided the Choctaws. A generation of warriors had grown up since the founding of Louisiana. They were eager to win glory and they could not understand why the great

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English tribe, of whom their fathers spoke so well, had allowed the French to remain on the Mississippi; or why the great English tribe had not subdued Canada. British reverses in Canada during the last war had amazed and angered these young warriors; the failure of the British to raise defences, to increase and arm troops against another war, which every Indian, and every trader, knew was coming, added contempt and disgust to their anger and surprise. The French were wooing them now with flattering appeals, the restless Senecas particularly. The Senecas controlled the Erie country and the French were willing to pay high for permission to erect a fort there. The noted Mohawk chief, Hendrick, uncle of Johnson's first Indian wife, Catharine, speaking for the Confederacy expressed the warriors' feeling without reserve:

Look at the French! They are men. They are fortifying everywhere; but we are ashamed to say it, you are all like women!

Johnson's family ties and the whole range of his talents were barely sufficient to hold the Iroquois through the months of official shilly-shally just prior to the Seven Years War. We see him inviting the chiefs and leading warriors to pow-wows, giving blankets, presenting belts of wampum, addressing skilful words to each tribe in turn and making an especial and pointed appeal to the Senecas

Brethren of the Six Nations. . . . Tis formidable news we hear that the French and some Indians are making a descent upon Ohio: is it with your consent? . . . Brethren of the Senecas, as you have always been looked upon as the door of the Six Nations where all news, especially from the Westward and Southward must enter and go out, we don't hear this door open as we used to do formerly, and believe it to be worn out, & think it necessary to hang on a new one of such wood as will never decay. . . .

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He satisfied the warriors that their grievance against their womanish allies would be removed: his next problem was to arouse the authorities to take the proper steps for defence. He succeeded in convincing them that, unless they acted, they would lose both the friendship and the furs of the Six Nations. He saved the alliance. Iroquois braves fought under Johnson's leadership in the Seven Years War, and the confederacy remained loyal to the English throughout that struggle and through Pontiac's War, which followed closely upon it.

The spark touched the tinder when the French built Fort Duquesne. They began their invasion of the Ohio country by erecting Fort LeBoeuf on a stream now called French Creek, flowing into the Alleghany river. Virginia claimed this territory under her sea-to-sea charter. She had already given grants to the Ohio and the Loyal land companies, which had engaged to colonize that far-off wilderness. The land companies of the period have their importance, especially in regard to Indian relations, but they do not belong to this story. Today we can see clearly that, while Canada remained French, with French and Indian warriors at her command and forts dotting the soil adjacent to the Ohio Country, English colonization there was impossible. It is reasonable to suppose that some of the grantees were as clear-sighted at the time. The only crops which they could be sure of gathering from that soil were furs. Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia sent the young surveyor, Lieutenant George Washington, to Fort LeBoeuf with a stiff letter to the commandant, to the effect that the French must remove, and vacate the King's lands. It was a futile gesture, of course. Washington built a fort at Great Meadows. The French took it away from him.

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The shots exchanged over Great Meadows were the opening volley of the Seven Years War, in which France was to lose her vast imperial possessions, India and Canada. Within the year the French had built, and strongly fortified, Fort Duquesne on the tongue of land at the junction of the Monongahela, Alleghany and Ohio rivers, the site of Pittsburg; and presently courageous and stupid General Braddock arrived from England, set out to take Duquesne and led his army of British and Colonial troops into an ambush. Braddock's Defeat is the popular name of this adventure, in which Braddock was mortally wounded and his army cut to pieces. The honors of the day, on the British side, went to young George Washington, aged twenty-three, whose youth put on youth's proper glory—that courage which is at once reckless and clear-visioned, seeing one high worth nullifying whatever else may be. Young men from the other colonies carried his name home and remembered it.

There were numbers of traders among the frontier soldiers with Braddock. One of them, John Findlay of Pennsylvania, struck up a friendship with young Daniel Boone, who had just attained his majority and was driving a supply wagon for the North Carolina contingent. Findlay told Boone about the Beloved Old Fields, where he had hunted with Shawnees, and stirred in him the passion of Nimrod for that hunter's paradise. Fourteen years later these two friends met again, in the Yadkin valley; and Findlay showed Boone the southern Indians' trail into Kentucky by Cumberland Gap. A few years later still, in the spring of 1775, Washington was summoned to take command of the Continental Army, which was to be the striking arm of a new nation in the world's disorderly

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family of nations; and Boone, assisted by "thirty guns" from Holston valley, was hacking away the brush and timber from the borders of the old warriors' path and traders' trace, widening it for the passage of settlers' wagons over the first lap of the new nation's journey toward the western sea. No close comparison can be drawn between Boone and Washington; they resembled each other only in the elemental qualities of manhood, in which each equally resembled an Iroquois. But both were young in this Fur Trade war, both felt there the first gust of the strong spring wind which inclined their growth and slanted their shadows on the soil. It is part of the romantic charm of history—the baffling, yet gripping, adventure tale, which Clio has inscribed with her sharpened stylograph on this clay sphere—that, to those reading long after, coincidences appear and illustrate the text, like good pictures: and themes recur and the events, which objectified them, draw together out of their different eras, as if time had no barriers to prevent the linking of kindred ideas; as if, indeed, time were deleted by the dictates of the literary form of the narrative.

An odd fragment of the Hudson Bay chapter was slipped into the North Carolina record of the Seven Years War. Governor Arthur Dobbs had recently come from London, where he had launched one of the longest and fiercest attacks against the Hudson's Bay Company which the Company has ever had to meet. He charged that the Company had not explored, nor colonized, nor sought the Northwest Passage; furthermore, he alleged, they had abused the Indians, encouraged the French and deceived all and sundry with their fabrications about Henry Kelsey and his marvellous journey. The Company defended them—

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selves successfully in the Parliamentary investigation which followed; though it is not clear that they produced Kelsey's diary, to refute Dobbs' charge. What had happened to the diary then; and how did it come, later, into Dobbs' possession? For he had it and it lay unsuspected in his huge collection of documents for a hundred and sixty-one years after his death, till 1926, when it was presented to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland by Major A. F. Dobbs of Carrickfergus. Governor Dobbs, during his bout with the Company, acquired some knowledge of the French trade and its methods and aims. He was the only colonial governor who grasped the real issue of the struggle in America; and he was the only one who co-operated instantly and to his full powers with Dinwiddie of Virginia (who was thinking of the Ohio in terms of soil and sovereignty). The others, as Dinwiddie said, "amus'd me with expectations!" The immediate championship of British rights by North Carolina in the traders' war was an echo from Nelson and Hayes rivers.

When the war began, the Cherokees agreed to send several hundred warriors to fight on the English side, as soon as a fort was erected for them near their towns: they were undergoing attacks from French Indians and needed protection. Yet, later, they allied themselves with the French and raided the back country settlements. The story of their changing allegiance is long, reiterative, sad and stupid. Besides French bribes and Indian treachery, it involves ignorance of Indian psychology, scorn of Indian rights, frontier ruffianism and the criminal folly of certain colonial governors, who thought this a good time to try to win Indian trade away from whatever other colonies had it. The Cherokees were hopelessly confused and went over

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in a body to the French; who, at least, knew what they wanted of the Indians and were not divided among themselves. Furthermore the French were not raising cabins, more and more cabins. The ancient Indian trail, through the beautiful Shenandoah valley into the good deer park of the Yadkin, was now the strangers' road, linking groups of cabins and plowed fields. The settler's plow struck and stopped on the foot ledge of the Cherokee's mountains; but the settler's eyes were looking up, looking for the passes. In 1753, just before the war, there were four thousand Scotch Highlanders and probably more than double their number of Ulster Scots, spread over the back country of the Carolinas. The Cherokee hunter surveying the Yadkin deer pasture now, from his mountains, saw domestic cattle, which did not belong to him. The French came with beads and went with furs. They did not build cabins, plow nor waylay small hunting parties of Indians and murder them to get their horses. As Croghan said, there was "too great a spirit in the frontier people for killing Indians"! This spirit also influenced the Cherokees' belated decision to side with the French. They did not make their decision until the third year of the war: after almost incredible bungling by the colonial authorities, and ill usage by some of the border settlers.

Adair, the English Chickasaw, held his adopted people loyal to a man. The Chickasaws, situated between the Cherokees and the Choctaws, prevented united action by these tribes in the French interest. Red Shoe's faction made the most of the Chickasaw difficulty, to discourage the French Choctaws from doing too much to help the brethren of an ill-mannered guest—with never so much as a "by your leave, Chief," which (such was tribal etiquette)

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could have been granted. Lachlan ruled the Creeks. But Lachlan was both trader and soldier in those days and he could not remain either at his Augusta trading post, or at home among his apple trees. In 1760, he was in Charleston. There word reached him that the French, skilfully compounding oratory, gifts and alcohol, had incited several hundred young warriors to attack the Georgia settlements. He knew that the young Creeks would come by the trader's trace past Augusta. He hastened out to his post with his partner, Galphin, and his young son, Alexander. If he failed to turn the braves, all three would die; they knew their risk. He met the warriors and invited them in. He presented his son to them as their brother and made a great feast, and gave away all the goods in his warehouse in celebration of the event. He won them from their purpose at heavy cost to himself as both father and trader, for young Alexander abandoned the career which he had entered upon in Charleston, after his student days, and returned with his red brothers to become a chief in the Creek nation. The date of Alexander's birth is uncertain; in 1760, he was probably nineteen or twenty. His blood was one-quarter Indian. According to the testimony of persons who knew him later in his life, he was very tall, handsome, and his appearance was arresting, chiefly because his large, dark eyes glowed so fierily. Those who felt something dread in his flaming glance seem not to have considered that, in those later years, Alexander was at least a fanatic, if not mad. As a youth he was brilliant, witty and well-educated. His father had recently placed him in the business world of Charleston. Though there is no record to this effect, it is obvious that part of the cost of saving the Georgians was the surrender of Alexander

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to the Indian life. To send a son to dwell in his "brother's" house, on making a solemn pact, was a general custom. Thereafter Alexander appears in colonial records as the peace chief, or White Leader, of the Creeks; always drawing his people closer to the English, a crusader for peace in the Indian world.

Then came the revolt of the American colonies. Lachlan remained loyal to Great Britain. The Georgians seized his property and hunted him through the swamps and savannahs, like a wolf; but he escaped and, supposedly, sailed for Scotland. The White Leader remembered 1760, when he had seen his father beggar himself and put his life on the hazard for these Georgians, and when he, himself, had become an Indian for their sakes. He hated them with an Indian hate, and his hatred embraced all their nation. He effected a confederacy of the southern tribes, with the exception of the Chickasaws; and, as a British officer in the Revolution and, after the Revolution, as a Spanish agent, he devastated the border settlements from Georgia to Kentucky. So far-reaching and so dread was his power that he forced the American government to pay him for his father's confiscated property. They created him Brigadier-General McGillivray and signed a treaty with him; and he wore the uniform when he led his braves against the settlements. He never meant a word of peace and amity which he spoke to an American. When, at last, he realized that his own days were numbered and that the Greeks would be crushed unless they ceased from war, he advised the young warriors to adopt American ways and to make a permanent peace. Wearied by a hate which could make no perfect wreckage, except in himself, he deserted the big house where he had lived in state, served by black slaves,

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while he received Spanish ambassadors and plotted massacres; and he went back to the spot where Lachlan had raised his first cabin—now tumbled to decay, with grass and tree-shoots pushing among the logs. He built his last home among his father's apple trees. The "Black Drink" of the Creeks, by itself, was potent: when rum was mixed with it, frenzy might stir in the first cup but there was forgetfulness in the second.

The Seven Years War was a loop, or ring, through which long strands passed. Its issues in America were practically decided with the fall of Quebec in 1759, but the fight went on for two more years. The French failed in their efforts to retake the city in 1760. A few months later the English took Montreal, the great fur dépôt of the St. Lawrence basin: that year saw all the key posts come into British hands. And what of Duquesne at the Forks of Ohio, the minute spark which had started a world-wide conflagration? In November 1758, and a rarely hard winter, an expedition set out to take it. They made a slow and painful march hewing out their road before them through the timber and snow. Their food gave out and depression took hold of many of the men, who remembered, more darkly now, that Duquesne was said to be heavily fortified and strongly garrisoned. A scout had the good luck to catch a French Indian, who told him that the French had gone, leaving only a few men. They pushed on and found the great fort burning. The small garrison, informed of their approach, had blown up the powder magazine and fled on snowshoes into the forest. The Ohio and its beaver were theirs, but they were bleak and hungry. They pitched camp under the chill gray sky, blackened at one edge by the coiling smoke of empire,

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and sent out hunters to seek the perfect cure for depression, the good red meat, which renews hope and vigor and refits slack belts in an hour without a finger's touch to the leather.

In a night, the thinning smoke of French power would be gone. The way was open for the settlers who would soon begin to move their plows and household goods over the trader's trace into the Ohio. The Indians were still there and they were strong enough to oppose small groups of homeseekers and farmers; though they were fewer in numbers than before the white men gave them guns and drew them into white men's wars. Beaver would become scarcer every season, as more forest fell and more land was planted with corn. Of the Three Kings, one was removed, soon the second would go; the third, and weakest, would linger a little longer. The American trader would pursue the beaver into farther wildernesses, his new trails becoming, in time, the roads of new generations of cabin-builders; but his self-chosen and brilliantly acted rôle of imperial scout was a thing of the past now, with the discarded drama of the French Peril. Historians, generally, have preferred paper to beaver parchment and they have neglected, even ignored, the trader's part in the early life of America. Yet he is a type which deserves a permanent place in our archives and portrait galleries. The colonial trader was a brave man, inured to danger; he rode no safe paths in pursuit of his commerce. The Indians trusted him because he spoke the Beloved Old Speech. He was a patriot, who felt it his duty to show by example, as well as precept, that a Briton was a better man than a Frenchman, or a Spaniard, and represented a better nation. He might be an educated man of the upper middle classes, like Adair,

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Sir William Johnson and Colonel Bull, or given to orthographic oddities like "King" Croghan, or, like Lachlan McGillivray, a man who could not spell at all; but, speller or no, he had his standard of ethics and he believed that the success of his trade depended, in no small degree, on his living up to that standard. He believed, also, that the safety of the small frontier settlements depended largely upon it. He urged governors, burgesses and the like to prohibit liquor from the Indian country: and this was a major plea of the Indians themselves in nearly all their "big treaty talks" with the governors. He begged the authorities to examine the character fitness of would-be traders before they granted licenses to them. Adair had much to say in Charleston about white riff-raff and liquor in the Indian towns. He was the spokesman for the southern traders of his standard, and he made himself a pest to the authorities. He told his world, through the local press, what he thought of official greed for license fees and illegal percentages, "graft" we call it. His small sons, like Lachlan's, drowed on puma skins, and he was pleading for them as well as for the nation to whom his "princess" belonged. Like responsible married men everywhere, the colonial trader's motives for action were the welfare of his family and the success of his business. It happened to him to live in a period and place where these enjoined on him much sacrifice and peril for the common good. He met the test.



CHAPTER XV

HORSE AND BUFFALO

THE end of the traders' war saw France, as a royal power, removed from North America. Canada was a British possession. Louisiana had been handed over to Spain. It will be recalled how once by bland persuasions Louis XIV induced his kinsman, Philip V, to allow France to colonize this southern realm, then claimed by Spain, as a safeguard for the Spanish colonies. When, by the fortune of war, his successor, Louis XV, lost Canada and the Illinois and, to balk England as well as to reimburse his Spanish allies, was forced to give Louisiana to Spain, believers in spectres may pleasantly wonder what thoughts emerged, like wailing wraiths, from a great king's crypt in France.

Spain had lost Florida to England, but she still had Texas and the territory west of it. Now she regained Lou-

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isiana, no longer a blind wilderness but a thriving trade centre, which had cost her nothing.

It is an interesting and curious fact that the Spanish explorers and colonizers never discovered the Fur Trade. When Iberville built his first post at Biloxi, the Spanish had been in Florida for a hundred and thirty-five years, but Beaver, building in the Creek country, had not yet heard of St. Augustine. Over part of this same Louisiana, Hernando de Soto had marched with his armored men. Among Creeks, Chickasaws and Cherokees he met chiefs who presented him with "shawls" of deerskin and marten; and he asked them for gold and pearls. On the bank of the Father of Waters, "departed this life the magnanimous, the virtuous, the intrepid Captain"; and his body was wrapped in "shawls" and sunk in the mighty stream, which would bear the canoes and pirogues of the fur traders to a golden market. That "richest province," which he sought, was in the Muskogee country, laced with beaver creeks, in the Chickasaws' shady forests beloved of the Marten People; it was wherever he went with his six hundred soldiers, killing, enslaving and mutilating Indian fur hunters and burning them alive in their houses with all their wealth of fine peltry.

Even the French successes in the Fur Trade did not spur the Spanish in Florida and Texas to engage actively in this commerce: and the New Mexico authorities seem to have done nothing toward luring furs from the trapping regions immediately north of them. To be sure, their difficulties increased during the first half of the eighteenth century; in a large degree, because of the tribes' growing admiration for the Spanish method of locomotion on land. Apaches, Navahos, Utes, Comanches, their nearer neigh-

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bors, ran off the New Mexican ranchers' horses and mules, kept them for their own use, or traded them to tribes to the north and east. By this stolen barter, horses were moving toward the Mississippi and the Missouri, as the French *coureurs-de-bois* and *voyageurs* moved westward to the Great Plains. The stolen horses bred and multiplied and herds of them roamed the grassy wilderness without masters. The wild herds may have begun over a century earlier when the Spanish first came to the Pueblos; or not until the Pueblos revolted and drove the Spanish out. It would be interesting to know when the first wild horse herd appeared to share the buffalo-grass with the burly monarchs of the prairie and the swift little antelopes. Kelsey makes no mention of horses. If the Blackfeet were riding in his day, surely the Assiniboines would have told him so.

They were riding forty years later, when Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de la Vérendrye came to the Saskatchewan. It is supposed that the Blackfeet acquired their first horses about the beginning of the eighteenth century. Originally their home territory was the buffalo plain stretching west from the Rockies to the fork of the Saskatchewan and north to the headwaters of the Athapaska river. After they rose to the saddle, they extended their land holdings southward to the Yellowstone river, driving out all poorer horsemen and all pedestrians—or reducing them to vassalage. Already a superior people, the horse made them superlative. They ranged far beyond their new boundaries, a fearless, fighting breed. Expeditions of sixty or more would ride southward when the sap was stirring in the green flanks of their coulees, and be gone till next year's berries were ripe. Their return would be announced by the thudding of many more hoofs than went forth with

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them; and, occasionally, they would show curious trophies, such objects as we call "Spanish antiques"—an item of a soldier's armour, a Toledo blade. We have considered a few of the changes wrought in the lives of the Indians of the eastern and northern woodlands by the white man's beaver trade. History makes these visible to us. The white man's horse wrought changes of another character, yet perhaps as deep, on the western Indians' buffalo plains. There is a psychology of horsemanship, acknowledged on the racing course and in the hunting field, where civilized men employ what is probably the oldest of the domesticated animals—which, in primeval days, exalted Upright-Walking-Beast and gave him speed with mastery. The earth reversed its rotations, turned back to the times before time, when America's Cro-Magnons, the powerful Blackfeet, leaped to the backs of horses. Vital changes, which no ethnologist was at hand to note, took place in the psychology, as well as in the material boundaries, of the western tribes with the advent of the horse.

Indian ponies were to play a prominent part in opening the west to fur traders, explorers and cabin builders. La Vérendrye and his immediate successors, who built a chain of posts in northwestern Canada—on Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, on the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan rivers, even to the foot of the Rockies—could cut across country on Blackfeet or Sioux horses instead of footing it and carrying goods and canoes. La Vérendrye was riding on that day, in 1743; when he paused to bury the leaden plate bearing the French king's arms, which was unearthed by a picnic party in the region of the Black Hills a few years ago. Although other nations were on horseback by this time, it seems likely that the people called

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"Horse Indians" by the early explorers were Blackfeet. The Blackfeet had gone in for breeding on a large scale. They owned immense herds in 1754 when Alexander Hendry arrived from Hudson Bay. Hendry was the first white man to describe these people. Matthew Cocking, who came from the bay, eighteen years later, agreed as to their superiority over their neighbors and their different appearance, "being more like Europeans." Neither emissary was able to coax them to go to York Factory. The Blackfeet said that they were already sending their furs, chiefly wolf skins, by the Assiniboines, who were "canoe people," which they themselves were not. And, they asked, what would happen to their horses, which were literally the seat of their power? They were friends of the Assiniboines at that time and they got from them such few articles as they considered useful, namely kettles, knives, and the beads which their women enjoyed. Guns were well enough, but not necessary to them, for they rode after buffalo and killed all they needed with their bows and arrows. As for white men's table stuff, dried peas, rice, oatmeal and so forth, they ate a few roots, such as the sweet roasted lily bulbs traded to them by the tribes west of the Rockies, but they called all vegetable stuffs, except wild fruits, "useless food." Their diet was buffalo flesh, and they needed no other. Their name for meat meant "real food." As to tobacco, they cultivated their own and liked it better. Why would any chief who possessed, personally, several hundred horses, make a long canoe journey for dried peas? Real men ate real food and travelled on horseback!

So, in a swiftly widening radius about Santa Fé and its small sister settlements, the primitive walking nomads captured arab ponies on the American desert and, on their

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backs, advanced to the next stage of culture. The horse was treasured for his usefulness and admired for his beauty. Once caught, a young wild horse was converted into a mount by the exercise of patience and gentleness. The Indian realized that the animal was in a state of fear and he devoted himself to winning its confidence. One method, if they were near deep water, was to drive the horses into it, so that they must swim instead of plunging and kicking; then the young Indians leaped in naked and swam with them, coming near and touching them, playing with their manes and tails, talking to them. The horses became accustomed to them, without being able to injure them; presently, their fear gone, they allowed their masters to slip upon their backs and ride them out of the water. Young boys tamed wild horses easily in this fashion.

There is a flash of poetry for those who can see it in that simple scene, of the Indian boy seeking and finding harmony with the other wild creature in the fluent element which was the primal source of both.

Racing on with the horse, ahead of our story, we see Lewis and Clark among the Shoshones in 1805, purchasing horses with which to cross the Rockies; and Astor's Overlanders buying horses from the Mandans near the present Bismarck, Dakota, six years later: we see the Rocky Mountain Traders and the brigades of the American Fur Company and of the Hudson's Bay Company riding in the far west; and Jim Bridger and Kit Carson hunting buffalo on Indian ponies and riding with the covered wagons to show the way through the mountains. And, while we are indulging in prophetic vision, we should watch the yellow dust cloud about Francois-Xavier Aubry, of old Missouri *voyageur* stock, now a trader of Taos, as he

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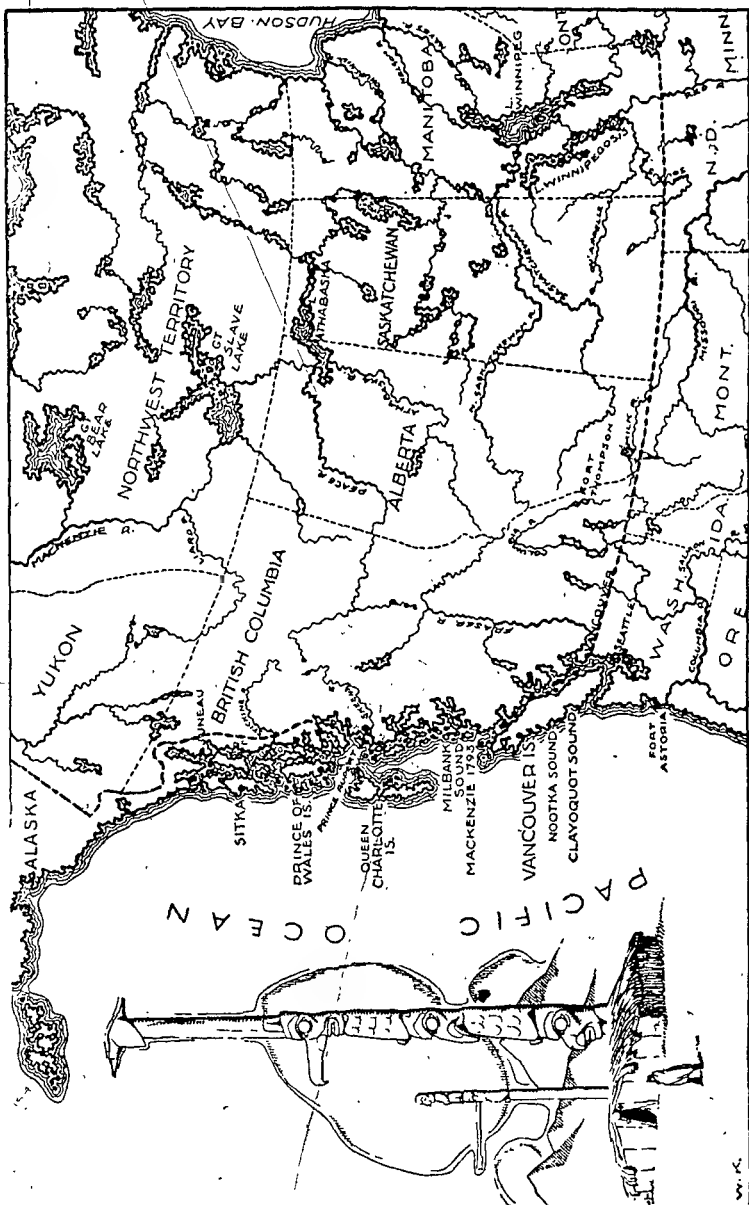
dashes into Independence, having covered the seven hundred and eighty miles from Santa Fé in five and a half days. The record of his speed, his daring, endurance, his system of relays, and the public need, are to combine, a few years later, to produce the Pony Express. The tale of the great West would have been slower-paced if there had been no Indian ponies. Old Indians can tell stories from the days before their people had horses, but they are frankly unable to conceive of life as it was then; they have thought as horsemen too long. The horse inspired a new development of their pictorial art and their literature. The silent Navaho, riding among the painted cliffs, may hear his mind singing an old song to the loping rhythm of hoofs: it is of the proud and beautiful horse spurning the hot bright dust in his flight, or "feeding on the tips of fair fresh flowers—How joyous his neigh!"

After the fall of Canada the British took over the management of the French fur posts outside Spanish Louisiana. The change greatly disturbed the Indians, and Pontiac's War was the result. New treaties were made after this war, and the tribes resumed their trading. The Fur Trade had gathered a momentum in the past years of its huge profits and its free life which wars could not stop. It had become a force of Nature and it was sweeping westward on the wind of its power. Though the favored French companies had fallen, *coureurs-de-bois* and *voyageurs* could not abandon the only life they knew. From the Northwest, along the trail blazed by La Vérendrye, came the old challenge calling out of a new place. Up There, some of the English-speaking rovers would call it. To the French Canadian it was to be *le pays d' En Haut*. Even before the matter of Pontiac's War was settled,

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Frenchmen, British Colonials and Scotch Highlanders were turning canoes up stream from Three Rivers or from Montreal. It was the activities of several Scots, in particular, on the Saskatchewan which brought Cocking from the bay in 1772 (with one of those gracious invitations worded in London) and Samuel Hearne from York in 1774 to erect the first far inland post of the Hudson's Bay Company. Hearne built Cumberland House on Pine Island Lake close to the trading post of an energetic Montreal merchant named Joseph Frobisher, later one of the organizers of the North-West Company. Next year two colonials, Peter Pond of Connecticut, and Alexander Henry (the elder) of New Jersey, who had taken part in the Seven Years War—Pond fought under Sir William Johnson and saw Montreal fall—were renewing acquaintance on Lake Winnipeg. The north lured every bold man with influence enough to acquire an outfit for trade. The least costly way to secure trade was with rum, or whisky, shipped at full strength and watered at the other end of the journey. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the free traders, who swarmed into the Northwest between 1768 and 1783—the date when the North-West Company was organized—deluged the Indian country with alcohol.

While one branch of the old French trade spread from Montreal, two other branches forked from Louisiana, the one up the Missouri to the Mandans, the other by the Mallets' trail into Santa Fé. With the erection of Cumberland House by Hearne of the Hudson's Bay Company the Fur Trade made a fourth branch, from the far north, into the vast central plains of the buffalo and the horse, where the next struggle for supremacy would take place. The old furs were to be taken in great numbers from new



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beaver creeks and from the woods about the easy system of waterways, with short portages generally, which connect the Saskatchewan river region with the bay and the Arctic. To look at the map of Canada is to suspect that Nature laid out this mighty territory with the needs of fur traders in mind! It is laced and linked with navigable waters, and the *voyageur's* paddle and songs have been on all of them. In the Northwest, besides the old furs, were "real food" in abundance and hides. Buffalo meat made the most palatable pemmican, which had become a necessary food for hundreds of white men. To make pemmican (a Cree word, meaning a mixture) the flesh was cut in thin slices, dried and finely shredded. Meanwhile broken bones had been boiling to free the marrow, which was now mixed with the meat. Usually dried saskatoons, or choke cherries, and a few mint leaves were added. The pemmican was packed down tightly in new bags of hide, and the top of the bag was sewed with sinew so that no air could penetrate. This food would remain edible for many months. Pemmican is one of the valuable gifts of the Indian to the white man. It has been the food mainstay of many polar expeditions. It is made in factories now, from domestic meat, shipped north and traded to the Indians and the Eskimos.

Buffalo leather presented difficulties to the free traders from Montreal and to the Company's men. It was bulky and heavy; a canoe could not carry many hides. In comparison with furs, they were costly and cumbersome freight to take over the two thousand miles to Montreal or down six or seven hundred miles of water and portage to Hudson Bay. So it came about naturally that the traders of the Santa Fé Trail developed the trade in buffalo

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hides. They hunted buffalo on horseback and took their hides to market, or much of the way, on pack horses. And because the tribes along the southern trail were fierce and treacherous—having had their dispositions spoiled long ago by Spanish military expeditions—these Santa Fé traders and buffalo hunters developed the Indian pony to a speed he had never attained before. They bred for swiftness, because their lives hung upon it. Hence Aubry's ride; and the Pony Express.

Over all that vast prairie land from north to south brooded the huge horned white one, like a cloud mass in the winter sky; but out of his cloud he sent, not countless snowflakes, but countless herds—He, the Buffalo Spirit-Person.

Since all human thinking is myopic, human beings generally incline to set new boundaries for themselves and their activities as soon as they have broken older ones. These prairie traders tacitly accepted the Rocky Mountains as the geographical limits of the trade. They had opened up an immense new fur tract and, as long as they lived, and after, it would be sufficient. Many of them knew by now that the Pacific Ocean was not far from the other slope of the mountains. But it did not occur to them that a foreign intrusion into the North American trade might come from beyond the Rockies by men in ships. It is the North-West Company—“Nor'Westers” as they were called, from their stormy behaviour—whom we find first expressing concern about the Russian sea otter hunters of Alaska.

To understand their concern about the Muscovy colony at Sitka, it is necessary to glance more closely at the status of the Fur Trade in northwestern Canada. From the day

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when the French reached the country about the headwaters of the Hayes and lured ashore the Indian brigades bound for the bay with their royal catch, the debauching influence of liquor had entered the native hunter's life. He did not get liquor at York Factory for his furs. But the French, being of one trading organization, could exercise some control of the liquor traffic and it seems probable that they did.

The free traders, who succeeded the French, were all competing with one another as well as with distant York Factory; many of them came in for one or two rich hauls, intending to live like gentlemen on the proceeds and never see *le pays d' En Haut* again, and Indians drunk were the easier robbed. The Adventurers of England suffered heavy losses for years without changing their policy. They were unenterprising, for we hear of no expeditions among the Indians except Hendry's in 1754, Cocking's in 1772 and Hearne's in 1774 when he built Cumberland House. Yet, since the Company were primarily fur traders, it is just to state a sound trader's reason for their slowness. It had been their good fortune to enter the Fur Trade on Hudson Bay, and thus to gather in the thick, northern, winter pelts which were the best on the continent. Their beaver, fox, otter and marten, taken only when the pelts were prime, led in the markets. Connoisseurs demanded Hudson's Bay Company furs. Their Indian customers trapped in winter and spent the spring and summer in the journey to and from the bay: therefore they did no summer killing, the animals were safe in the breeding season. Summer pelts were poor, the Company did not want them; and the preservation of valuable fur-bearing species was important to the Adventurers of England, who had not entered this

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commerce for a season or two, but forever. The traders from Montreal, on the contrary, took furs caught in all seasons and encouraged the all-year hunt, for they were in a hurry to be off and any pelt could be sold in Montreal for something. Under their tutelage the Indian ceased to be a poised and upright man and a conservationist, who held the rights of the Animal Peoples to be as sacred as his own; he became a drunkard and an exterminator. The governing board of the old Company in London were too far away from the scene, too remote from the life, to realize that their chief ends as fur traders could be as well, if not better, served by the establishment of inland posts.

The North-West Company was formed by a group of free traders, to put an end to the cut-throat competition among them. They inherited the sinews of war of the old French companies in the horde of *voyageurs* and *courcurs-de-bois* who had been tossed on St. Lawrence's and Michigan's banks in the overthrow of their masters. They paid generously and bestowed tobacco: and fires glowed on long shores and a hale resinous smell was in the air, as the *voyageurs* made new canoes, or gummed old ones, and sang for joy—like decaudate mermaids who had miraculously found their fish tails again.

Tu es mon compagnon de voyage!

Je veux mourir dans mon canot . . .

Le laboureur aime sa charruë, le chasseur
son fusil, son chien;

Le musicien aime sa musique: moi, mon canot
est tout mon bien!

Not that all of them had lacked employment with the squabbling free traders; but now came the old life on a

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grander scale, with farther rivers to reach, new tribes to marry with, more buffalo meat, and what wages! "*Je suis un homme du Nord!*" was to be the proudest boast of a man whose conversation was all of brass, except for a slight corrosion of penitence in the confessional. The company looked for intelligent, ambitious young men, gave them clerkships, with the chance of becoming partners, and good pay. They had everything to gain by putting their whole strength into the venture. Names were written in the books which were to shine brilliantly long after: Alexander Mackenzie, Peter Pond, Simon Fraser, David Thompson, the map-maker and, later, Peter Skene Ogden. The Nor'Westers took over whatever old French forts were convertible and launched northward to erect others. The Adventurers of England, roused from their lethargy, prepared to contest every pelt. The war was really on in the 'nineties; it waxed fiercer yearly until amalgamation, in 1821, ended it amid the ruins of the trade. The Company had to change its liquor policy, or retire from the trade—the same choice that was offered the French so long before, when the Dutch opened the first rum barrels in the Indian country. Among the ruling council in London were philanthropists, men honored for their public spirit. They argued against the change, which all the members were reluctant to see effected. It was well for them that they could not see their traders on the beaver trails in those days! Fur brigaders fought, as Adair's caravans had fought with French traders and their Indians in the Choctaw's forests. "Company's" men and Nor'Westers' men raided each other's posts, captured chief traders, burned and destroyed; they outbid until there was no profit when the furs reached Montreal or

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London. The tribes entered gaily into the sport and robbed everybody, friend or foe. The Nor'Westers did their best to make the Company's traders' misdeeds tell against the Company in England, where the natural jealousy of other merchants, and the aid of the Company's political enemies, might be enlisted to overthrow the charter. The Nor'Westers saw that, to possess themselves of the Fur Trade, they must break the power of the Adventurers at home, in England. If they could not bring about the rescinding of the Company's monopoly of the Fur Trade in the region draining into Hudson Bay, they could, perhaps, secure a charter for themselves giving them control of the country whose waters did not drain into the bay. This too was a vast region, as we can see by a glance at the map of the Canadian northwestern and Pacific coast territories: it included the headwaters and upper navigable stream of the Columbia, the whole of the Fraser in British Columbia, the whole of the Peace, which rises in British Columbia and helps form the Mackenzie's headwaters, and the mighty Mackenzie itself, which flows from Slave Lake into the Arctic sea; and the by no means inconsiderable streams which are the tributaries of those large rivers. Here was a second empire awaiting its chartered lords.

At this date the present British Columbia and Oregon—save for fragments of their coast line—were unknown, and no white man had seen the Fraser, or the Columbia. A century had passed and the Adventurers of England had not yet found, nor searched for, the Northwest Passage nor the River of the West, and China was as far off as ever. Since the mighty hubbub raised by Arthur Dobbs, there had been offered by Parliament (1745) an award of

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twenty thousand pounds sterling for discovery of the direct route. Cook had tried for it along the Pacific coast, in 1778, and put in at Nootka where the natives made presents to him and his crew of sea otter skins. When, after his death, his ships reached China, the seamen were amazed at the prices offered for these pelts. The talk of sea otter and Chinese gold got about in circles where there was already some knowledge of the Russian trade. John Meares, late of the British Navy, sailed to Nootka, built cabins and raised the British flag. The Spanish, who claimed the whole Pacific coast, at least to the Russian holding, seized his colony and his ships. England demanded redress; and there was more said about sea otter. Bold seamen from Boston, who had read Cook's account, or heard of his otter skins while they were in Hong-Kong, were already killing otter in Clayoquot Sound. But they had not discovered the River of the West, which, supposedly, flowed into the passage.

The Nor'Westers decided to explore, to find the river and the sea passage, which latter must lie to the north; and they must be quick about it, because, if they delayed, the Russians in Alaska would forestall them. The western mouth of the passage, they thought, could not be far from the sea otter hunting grounds of the Sitka colony: the Russians might stumble on it any day. Let the Nor'Westers but make that glory their own and the British government could not deny the charter which would create the North-West Company sovereigns of a vaster, richer realm than was ruled from Hudson Bay. A memorial addressed by Peter Pond to the Hon. Henry Hamilton, in 1785, shows what was in the minds of Nor'Westers. Pond points out the danger of Russian settlement advancing down the

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coast, and of the Americans planting posts, as they were now coming annually to kill otter; and he indicates that the loyal bulwark of British sovereignty is the North-West Company!

He makes no mention of a Spanish danger. Though Spanish mariners had sailed the west coast many years before, and one of them had noted the impact of a river current in the changing sea tides, the Spanish contented themselves with claiming the whole coast and did not colonize it. They knew about the sea otter herds and that the crude Russian barbarians were killing them and selling their pelts. They chased Meares' colony away, but without pondering why it was there; and they watched Robert Gray of Boston buying skins at Nootka, and were not interested. Furs had no lure for Spaniards, in Louisiana forests or in Oregon waters. And this was one reason why Spanish culture did not spread over America. Beaver led two nations, two languages, two types of civilization, inland and into a death grapple; Buffalo took the English-speaking survivor out on the plains and sustained him; from under the poop of a Russian ship in Spanish Oregon waters, Sea Otter lifted his head to declare for the Anglo-Saxon; the far North still belongs chiefly to the Arctic Fox and the Hudson's Bay Company's traders; but where traders can live, so can other men who speak their language. Cabins may yet rise and group in the land of the White Fox People.



CHAPTER XVI

LOOMS A FOREST OF HORNS

THE Russian sea otter hunters, who had founded posts and a settlement in Alaska—i.e. on “Spanish soil”—and the fall of Canada to the English, who had already encroached upon “Spanish soil” on the southern Atlantic seaboard, roused Carlos III of Spain to action. He came to the throne in 1759; the year when Quebec fell. At the close of the Seven Years War he was in possession of Louisiana. His first move was intended to check the Russians and to strengthen the claims of Spanish sovereignty in the Pacific. He founded San Francisco, in 1775, and the attendant presidios and missions. France induced Spain to enter the War of Independence, which was nothing of the sort, in the opinion of the two Bourbons, but only a war to dispossess England. It was agreed between them that there

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was to be no independence for America, once England was eliminated. But England's loss of her colonies did not put her in the mood to play cat's-paw for the Bourbons. She agreed to the independence of the colonies and thereby threw the Bourbons' plans into the air. She still possessed Canada, and her Canadians were already pushing out in the direction of the Spanish Pacific. Then came the Englishman, Meares, to build at Nootka, and various Boston vessels to trade for otter skins, shortly after Cook's disturbing voyage in search of the passage. Probably Carlos had small fear of the Americans planting themselves on shore: the new nation was not large and strong, and its western settlements in Tennessee and Kentucky were staggering under the continuous blows of the White Leader's confederacy of tomahawks; to say nothing of the subtler treacheries of General Wilkinson, "No. 13" in the Spanish, secret service. Carlos was then paying both No. 13 and Alexander handsomely. But he was inclined to fight, when England demanded redress in the case of Meares; and he called on France to remember the family proverb to the effect that whoever touched one Bourbon's crown touched the other's. But other forces than fur-hunting Englishmen were out to trouble Bourbons: Louis XVI had just seen his Bastille fall. Spain alone had to resent this touch on a Bourbon's crown, which she was not in a position, financially, to do. She agreed to reimburse Meares, to restore Nootka to the British, and she acknowledged the right of British subjects to free navigation, commerce and fishing in the North Pacific and to make establishments on the coast. So ended the Spanish claim to sole sovereignty of the Pacific; and the signed articles contained the spirit, at least, of the principles of a free sea and of ownership by

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occupation, which were to prove of importance to the Fur Trade when it entered Oregon and British Columbia, and were to decide what flags should fly over those territories.

Just prior to this significant, diplomatic settlement, the Nor'Westers had made their first great geographical effort in pursuit of a charter. In the summer of 1789, Alexander Mackenzie of Fort Chipewyan, on Athapaska lake, set out to follow the course of the large river which, as he knew, left Great Slave lake in a south-westerly direction. Great Slave lake had been first discovered by Hearne on his notable journey from Fort Churchill across the Barren Grounds, and recently re-discovered by Peter Pond, who reached it by the chain of waters from the Saskatchewan. Pond was an energetic, ambitious and unlearned explorer, whose map was unreliable, but he knew about the river. He had talked with some Chipewyans, who had accompanied Hearne down the Coppermine, and he had gathered a good deal of information about the country to the north. He had discovered Athapaska lake and river and opened trade in that rich fur region. The American Revolution sounded loud echoes in Athapaska: in 1782 warships of America's French allies destroyed the Hudson's Bay Company's huge stone fort at the mouth of Churchill river, with all its goods, and there was nothing for the Chipewyans when they arrived to trade. Many of them died of starvation, all suffered as they struggled back across the barrens on the long trek home. This tragic situation inclined them to welcome Peter Pond and his laden canoes on their own waters with special ardor; and the Chipewyan trade from this region was lost to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Pond left Athapaska and Mackenzie succeeded him; and the thought of that river flowing out of the great lake to

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the north gave him no peace. He hoped that it was the River of the West, a legend now about to become a fact. He set out on its current and found that it turned north and emptied into the Arctic; and that there was no passage in its neighborhood. He had discovered a navigable river over two thousand miles long, the huge life stream running through a vast territory; and, if exploration and discovery *per se* had been the objectives of the Nor'Westers, joy must have reigned in all their posts. On the contrary, even the young explorer himself considered his journey a failure! In discovering his Arctic-mouthed river he had merely duplicated Hearne's feat of discovering and following the Coppermine to its debouching point in Coronation Gulf. Rivers flowing into the Arctic were not stuff for a charter. Mackenzie wrote to a friend that there was no enthusiasm about his voyage, "nor did I expect it."

Robert Gray of Boston, who had been at Nootka when Meares' belongings were seized, made another voyage to Oregon waters for sea otter and discovered the Columbia river. He entered its mouth on May 11th, 1792, sailed up it a short distance and named it for his ship. His achievement roused very little interest. His countrymen paid him no honors; when Gray died, in Charleston in 1806, he died in poverty. He had found the legendary River of the West, the large river which emptied into the Pacific, the fabulous "Oregon" rising in the Mountains of Bright Stones: and nobody cared.

For some years nobody would care, but Nor'Westers. When the news penetrated to them, perhaps a year or more after Gray's return to Boston in 1793, they would care very much. The Russian traders would care, too, later yet, when the news had crossed one ocean to Russia and

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another to Alaska. The tale of Gray's discovery would travel slowly, because it was not considered startling news in Boston among the merchants who had sent him out. They were more concerned with their insufficient profits: Gray was probably a poor trader, they did not send him out again. Mackenzie had not heard of the event in October 1792, when he turned his canoes into the mouth of Peace River, so named because the Crees and the Beaver Indians made their peace on a point near its mouth. Mackenzie's object was two-fold: to visit the northwestern posts and, if necessary, to reorganize them, and to cross the mountains to the Pacific. He reached the sea at Milbank Sound, on the British Columbian coast on July 22, 1793. There was no river. He left the Northwest soon after, with a tidy sum from his trading, and went home to Scotland. In 1802 he was knighted.

Mackenzie's discoveries and the news of Gray's river helped to fire the explorer's temper in David Thompson. Thompson was a Welshman, who had come to Churchill, from the Grey Coat School in London, as an apprentice when he was fourteen years old. He served for awhile under Hearne, then was transferred to York Factory and later went into the Northwest to help build new posts. He was stationed at Cumberland House long enough to study mathematics and astronomy under the Company's astronomer, Philip Turner, who made that post his headquarters. Thompson wished to explore and survey, to put his own findings, whatever they might be, and other men's, into a map of the whole Northwest: his passion was knowledge, not glory, not even furs, though no trader was more successful with Indians. The Hudson's Bay Company missed a great opportunity when they turned deaf ears

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to young Thompson's pleas. True, they were suffering in the reckless competition of those days, and they had lost a fortune in the destruction of the mighty stone fort at Churchill, and the subsequent diversion of the Chipewyan trade. Also, they lacked the specific motive for exploration, which urged their rivals; they already had their charter. The Nor'Westers made Thompson an offer. At Deer Lake on May 23, 1797, Thompson made this entry in his journal:

This Day I left the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and entered that of the Company of the Merchants from Canada. May God Almighty prosper me.

His new employers gave him free rein, with orders on their posts for whatever he needed. He was to trade, of course, as his journeying would always lead him among Indians. Here was a man who had acquired scientific knowledge in the wilds of Saskatchewan through books and study; the Nor'Westers wanted him to use it in their behalf. Thompson set out in June and kept the trail almost continuously for nine years. He charted the known fur region, showing the locations of the trading posts, found the forty-ninth parallel, which was to be the boundary between the two northwesterns, visited the Mandan country, searching old village sites for fossils, listening to old lore, gathering what he could of Indian history. He was twenty-seven when he began his work, and an oddity in that company of hard-hitting, hard-drinking Nor'Westers. He was a little man with black hair cut straight across his forehead, dark-skinned and ruddy-cheeked; quiet, never a brawler, a total abstainer who would not trade a drop of liquor to Indians, a prayerful man living within a realm of practical faith

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which he strengthened daily by earnest study of his little black Bible. Withal he was master of his brigade; his crews went through perils and hardships with him which they might have refused under other leadership. The Indians called him Star Man and believed him to be mysteriously related to the Great Spirit by the telescope through which he watched the sky. To the *voyageurs*, also, he was a man apart, and a protecting spirit. They put their confidence in him, crossing the desolate stretch of Athapaska Pass where, said the Indians, mammoth beasts roamed, and where they themselves saw the track of giant paws in snow with "four large toes; each of four inches in length, to each a short claw; the ball of the foot sunk three inches lower than the toes: the length fourteen inches by eight inches in breadth, walking from north to south and having passed about six hours." The track could be seen for a hundred yards but no one wanted to follow. Thompson explained it as that of a monstrous grizzly, so old that his claws were worn down; yet its unlikeness to any bear track he had ever seen continued to trouble him. Once through the pass, Thompson and his little band were in an unknown realm with the Rockies between them and their friends. More earnestly now than ever did they listen to him after supper when he read aloud from his Bible, by the firelight, and translated its sustaining promises into *voyageur* French and the tongue of his braves. It was in 1807 that Thompson crossed to map the country along Simon Fraser's river, to see the Columbia's headwaters, explore the new territory and follow the river to the sea.

It is a question how much he knew of Lewis and Clark's expedition, which was back in St. Louis in September 1806. Thompson did so much trading with the Blackfeet

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that he must almost surely have heard from them of Lewis' unfortunate brush with their southern group when he was exploring Marias river. This episode, due in part to Lewis' lack of understanding, was a plague to white men for more than half a century: and, during the years immediately following, it made every fur trader look to his life. The Blackfeet had never welcomed the warring traders and their rum, both of which were undermining their suzerainty over their neighbors. After Lewis killed one of their tribe they were willing to take any white man's life.

Meanwhile the sea otter trade had been growing. In 1801 there were fifteen American ships in the Pacific and their catch was fourteen thousand pelts which sold in China at thirty dollars apiece. A New York fur merchant, named John Jacob Astor, had become a prey to those imperial notions which the Fur Trade inspired. It occurred to him that he and the Nor'Westers should amalgamate, plant posts and, together, dominate the trade of the continent. The Nor'Westers refused; they felt that they could do without Astor. Astor won away some of their experienced traders: David Stuart, nicknamed "Labrador" from his long residence there, his nephew, Robert Stuart, Duncan McDougal and Donald Mackenzie, a relative of Alexander's; and a number of clerks, three of whom wrote detailed diaries, Alexander Ross, Gabriel Franchère and Ross Cox; and a small horde of *voyageurs*. One expedition was to go to the mouth of the Columbia overland, by Lewis and Clark's trail; the other in Astor's ship, the *Tonquin*, which would, later, carry the furs to market. When the Nor'Westers learned of Astor's plans, they recalled Thompson for a consultation and then sent him to build a

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post on the upper waters of the Columbia and to raise their ensign and England's over that territory.

Astor's great venture has its monument in Irving's "Astoria," which is undoubtedly correct in most of its details, though it errs sometimes in interpretations. Astor showed astuteness when he enlisted seasoned Indian traders, who knew how to get furs and how to manage both natives and *voyageurs*. He showed his lack of experience when he gave authority over them to Captain Thorne of the *Tonquin*; and to Wilson Price Hunt of St. Louis, on the overland journey. Thorne's arrogant disdain of advice gave the Clayoquot natives their opportunity to massacre his entire crew. Hunt's ignorance of wilderness travel was responsible for the terrible hardships of the overland party. How far the New York mind was from the mind of the wilderness is seen in one early incident, when Mr. Astor first met his *voyageurs*, and the manner in which Irving relates it. The threat of war with England was in the air: "as a precautionary measure therefore," Astor required the *voyageurs* to become naturalized American citizens. They agreed readily, and presently told him they had done so; and all so pleasantly, with their charming air, that he never doubted. As a matter of fact, they had done nothing of the sort; they had indeed "entirely deceived him in this matter"! Did Astor explain to them first that they were British? If so it is almost certain that they did not believe him! Innocent, yet crafty, like the red men whose blood was in their veins, they would understand nothing of all this, but they would be too clever to swear oaths, or put their marks on paper—to find anon that they had signed receipts for their wages and now would not be paid anything! But they would never be so discourteous

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as to let their new *bourgeois* know that they had seen through his little trick; nor would they bear him any ill will.

Fort Astoria was built in May 1811. Thompson was then building a post at the mouth of the Spokane. The Russians had intended to build at the mouth of the Columbia in 1810, having been nursing plans to that end for four years, with a view to securing the whole coast from Alaska to California. A Boston shipmaster, named Winship, heard of the Russian design and, to prevent it, he ran his vessels into the river and put up a shack. The Indians drove him out; but his presence on the scene deterred the Russians, who waited for a better opportunity. Next year, Astor's men were there. Astor's entry was well-timed, for America; it discouraged the Russians as to the Columbia, though they hastened down to California and got permission from the Spanish to erect a trading post at Bodegã. They fortified it, which was not in the bargain and, despite protest, refused to budge or dismantle. Otter was the spirit-person who presided over imperial dreams in the west, as Beaver had been in the east.

When Thompson's canoe floated down to Astor's fort, shortly after the departure of the *Tonquin* on her fatal voyage to Nootka, the Astorians received their old *confrère* with open arms. To Thompson, beaching his canoe meant that he had completed his exploration of the river from its headwaters to its mouth; he had brought another large tract out of the unknown into the known. And it meant the pleasure of old associations renewed. To the Astorians, under McDougal's charge, his visit must have been a godsend. They knew him as a great explorer, a lovable companion, and a trader who stood out for efficiency

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in an organization which contained no dunderheads. He arrived on a scene where stupidity and strife had ruled; for, only by finally ignoring Thorne's authority completely, had McDougal got his fort erected in a protected location; Thorne having tried to insist on a low-lying sand spit which the Indians could have attacked on all sides. Thompson and McDougal were traders for rival organizations, but their trade rivalry did not touch their personal ties and the deeper bond of *les hommes du Nord*. The Astorians gave Thompson supplies for his return journey and some of them accompanied him up the river; not merely as a courtesy, but also to take a look at his Spokane post, and to build one near it, so that they could draw off his trade.

The destruction of the *Tonquin* was a body blow to the Astorians. They were without transportation for their furs. The War of 1812 was on and a British warship might appear any day to compel surrender. The Astorians were no more apprehensive about that peril than were the Nor'Westers, who wanted the post themselves. In the darkest hour of Astorian gloom, the Nor'Westers arrived in force and let McDougal make a bargain with them which was not too hard on him, considering that he was really helpless. They purchased Astor's furs, his fort and all that was his on the Columbia, for about a third of the actual value. When a little later, an English man-of-war arrived, eager to capture the rich prize, her expectant seamen were probably not thrilled, as patriotic warriors ever should be, at the sight of their own flag gaily flying over the fort. The Nor'Westers inherited a new trade with several posts: through the present Oregon, Idaho and Washington, and into British Columbia, where Labrador

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Stuart built a post as far north as the present Kamloops. The treaty after the war restored Astoria to the United States; but Astor had no redress, because his property had been sold. He never forgave McDougal for the sale and his heavy losses. But McDougal, himself, and the other partners received nothing for their two years of hard work and danger. And ill fortune bore more cruelly on the *engagés* than on Astor; for, in the *Tonquin* massacre, in the wreck of Astor's other boat, the *Lark*, and under privation and Indian attacks on the overland march, sixty-five men lost their lives; and the majority of these lives were a sacrifice to the ineptitude of the commanders selected by Astor. He saw one way in which he could strike back at the Nor'Westers. He had influence and, at his instigation, Congress passed a law forbidding alien traders to operate within the bounds of the United States except as employees of Americans. This law banished British traders from the Missouri and the southern shores of the Great Lakes; but the Nor'Westers cared nothing for that! They had the Pacific coast trade; under the agreement between England and America which, two years later, in 1818, was formulated as the Joint Occupation Treaty. The publicity given to Astor's affair helped to stimulate the Missouri trade, of which St. Louis was now the headquarters.

Meanwhile the struggle between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Nor'Westers waxed fiercer. The climax came when Lord Selkirk purchased stock in the old Company and a tract of land about Red river and sent out the first cabin-builders to Manitoba. The Nor'Westers said that cabins and beaver were anomalous and proceeded to make trouble for the colony. In 1816 they attacked it

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and killed the governor and twenty settlers. The echoes of far-off lawless doings reached the House of Commons; slowly, yet inevitably, a parliamentary investigation got under way, in 1819. With the murders at Red river the North-West Company had gone too far. It had hanged itself. The Nor'Westers could only seize on the offer of the Adventurers of England to amalgamate. Thereafter there was one organization in the northern field, the Hudson's Bay Company. The return of the Company to sole power was good for the Indian and for the Beaver. Killing in the breeding season lessened, if it did not entirely cease: the liquor traffic was stopped. There was law again in the North. Wagons began to roll across the prairies, with cabin-builders in them. Fort Garry was built, in 1835, as a trading post and a protective centre for homesteaders; in time it would be submerged in the city of Winnipeg. On the southern fur trail, Sublette and Campbell, two traders going after beaver, drove the first covered wagon over the ground which hordes of pioneers would soon cross to California and Oregon.

In Oregon, settlement was begun, as at Winnipeg, largely by the Company under the need of providing for its old *engagés*. *Voyageurs*, too old for the trail, were growing potatoes on the banks of the Willamette when the settlers from the east came in. The Company opened schools at various posts and invited missionaries.

The great gold strikes in the far west, first in California, and a few years later on the Fraser river in British Columbia, changed the character of the west by luring hundreds of people who had no interest in furs nor—while the gold mania lasted—in soil. The subsidence of the mania in British Columbia, however, showed the province with a

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population which must be reckoned with: in need of cross-country transportation swifter than the Red river carts, which had brought many of them in. To join all the pieces of Canada in one and to place them all under one system of government was the inevitable next step. So the Adventurers of England surrendered their charter to meet the needs of the Dominion of Canada. Since then, the Hudson's Bay Company has been an independent trading company like any other, without favors. Founded in 1670, and still successful in 1933, it is unique in the annals of trade. After absorbing the stormy Nor'Westers and thus bringing the whole Northwest, including the North Pacific coast, under its rule, the Company was law and boon to some fifty thousand Indians, whom it rescued from destruction through liquor. The Indians of the Northwest had disliked the smell and the taste of rum when it was first brought to them; there was much coaxing and insisting before they would drink it; then, shortly, they were liquor-mad and would not trade without it. The Company did not work its great reform without difficulty; nor without danger to its traders, whose refusal to produce liquor incensed the Indians. It was a slow, dangerous business, requiring the good trader's full equipment of tact and fearlessness, to bring the tribes back to the old standard. But it was accomplished. When, after 1876, the Northwest Mounted Police came into the prairie provinces, they took over a territory where Indians were friendly, sober and orderly and expectant of square dealing from white men in power.

Sea otter has become a rarity; from most of its old haunts it has wholly vanished. Alaska passed into American hands though few save whalers and sealers knew it.

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Then came the gold strikes and the salmon canners and the loggers; and for years the public forgot that the only products of Alaska were not gold, fish and timber. Then, recently, within half a dozen years, reindeer meat has appeared on the menu cards of city cafés to interest that very large number of eaters who prefer "real food" and therefore welcome a new meat. Reindeer fawn skins, with fine furs for trimmings, are growing in favor for women's jackets. Full grown skins make the sleeping bags for all the men who go on polar expeditions. Reindeer skins make the explorers' clothing, his socks, shoes, his coat and shirt, his hood. The reindeer contributed to the success of the expeditions of Stefansson, Byrd, Amundsen and Wilkins. Airplanes are being used in the great reaches of the northern country; and deerskin shirts are *chic* for fliers. But reindeer have another purpose in the sub-arctic regions than to serve the white man's sciences and commerce, and the white woman's taste for lovely jackets. They were introduced into Alaska from Siberia for the benefit of the Eskimos, to enable them to become self-supporting after the decrease of whaling and sealing. The Canadian government is now bringing in deer from Alaska for the Eskimos of Arctic Canada. This spring, 1933, three thousand Alaskan reindeer are moving on to Kittigazuit Peninsula on the east shore of the Mackenzie river delta, after a march of three and a half years from Kotzebue Sound.

The Reindeer People are among man's oldest animal friends, and we do not know when they were first domesticated. They are brothers of the Barren Ground Caribou People, who move north and south across a vast tract and give food and clothing to Eskimos and northern Indians.

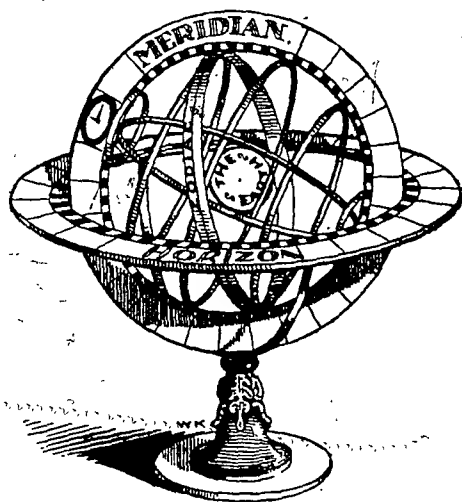
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Indians sometimes owned caribou, as pets, which they had raised from fawns; but the American nomad had not yet begun to domesticate the wild caribou when white men came and ended the natural order of development. With the Reindeer People, themselves, seemingly nothing has changed through the long ages, except coloring. The protected domestic deer are not limited to the caribou's dun coat, which baffles the wolf because it melts into the hue of the feeding grounds. The reindeer show white patches on their coats sometimes: they even give birth to white fawns. The Reindeer People observe their ancient seasons, like their wild kinsmen. On the great trek from Kotzebue Sound to the Mackenzie, herded by a few Lapps and Eskimos, they have crossed large rivers, such as the Kobuk and the Colville, and the high ranges of the Brooks and the Endicott mountains. Their travelling season is, approximately, from November to March, and they "live off the country" as they go; breaking up the ice and hard snow with their heavy large hoofs, to uncover the moss for their feeding. The bulls drop their antlers about the first of the year, the does keep theirs till their fawns are born—the migration has halted each spring for the fawning season—and the young fawns do not drop theirs until the end of their first winter. They need them to jab into the sides of the bulls, to push the hornless big fellows away from the moss uncovered by their heavy hammering hoofs. The little fawn's young feet are not strong enough to break the ice; he must keep close to the bull and then prick him to make him move away, or he would starve. Through the spring and summer, the fawning and the mating seasons, there is no movement forward; then, with the early winter, they go on—a forest of slow-swaying

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antlers, moving forward with a subdued shining, through the dim silver scene, on dark days, or showing a ruddier gleam when the burnished horns of the mystical Keeper of Fire toss darkness away and make earth, sky, herd and all life to move, for a little while, on their wide, bright rhythm.

Beaver, Buffalo, Sea Otter, White Fox, and now Reindeer: we seem to have arrived back at the beginning of the American story, when the pioneers, both fur traders and cabin builders, put on the beautiful deerskin clothing.





CHAPTER XVII

“HUZZA! LE PAYS SAUVAGE!”

ON RIVER and plain, by diplomacy and war, the *voyageurs* carried the Fur Trade—trail-blazer for civilization—westward from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and northward to the Arctic. As a class, a gens definitely separated from the *habitants*, they may be said to have had their origin in Three Rivers, founded in 1634 on the edge of the western Beaver Lands. With the founding of Montreal, and its rise as the headquarters of the trade, their numbers increased rapidly. They eluded census-takers and, in the heyday of the trade, none knew the actual numbers of them on all the waters of the continent north of Mexico. They had begun life as Norman sailors. With the adaptable temper of their race, they took to the Indian's canoe and made it their own; with the same hereditary flexibility

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they exchanged a sailor's life for a woodsman's, and were efficient and happy. Later, when the trade reached the prairies, they climbed on ponies, stuck on, too, and shot buffalo. In the Northwest they rode only in the hunting season; those who were trappers in the winter would go into the woods on snowshoes and, in the spring, they would all be off in their canoes again. Therefore it is likely that their equestrianism was imperfect. The Blackfeet thought so. A young Blackfeet, who wanted to be comical, would imitate a *voyageur* on horseback and all his companions would roar with laughter. But in the Southwest, where the *voyageurs* gave up the canoe for the saddle, they became true horsemen, such as F-X Aubry. As warriors they were bold and savage and disinclined for military discipline. As diplomatists they were superb. It need not be thought that the leaders of expeditions were solely responsible for tribal good will. That was more largely due to the *voyageurs*, squatting and smoking with the braves about the camp fire, offering tobacco and flattery, and expatiating on the glories of "*mon bourgeois*," as they called their trader.

Theirs was communal greatness. Every brigade acknowledged the difficulty of singling out notable individuals where all were pre-eminent! But *les hommes du Nord* drew a sharp line between themselves and the Mackinaw Company's *voyageurs* who paddled from Montreal to Michillimackinack and home again. Tame water fowl, these fellows! Ducks on a barn-yard pond! The Mackinaws held a higher opinion of Mackinaws; and they affected, loudly, to disbelieve every tale of prowess which came from the North. When the rival crews met at Michillimackinack, brawls were the rule. Gay-hearted folk, nat-

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urally, happiest when singing, or dancing to screeching fiddles after a feast which would lay any *fille-de-ballet* by the heels and silence most tenors, *voyageurs* did little quarrelling. They met smilingly almost any ill stroke, save a wound to their vanity. This called for blood: and, when they went out for blood, they were savage rough-and-tumble fighters, gouging, biting, kicking, but seldom taking to the knife. Not even threats involving their allowances of tobacco and rum could hold Mackinaws back from attempting vengeance upon the insolent swaggerers from the Saskatchewan.

The men of the North had some right to boast that only the sun out-travelled them. And the sun's road was easier. Some of them had gone with Mackenzie to the Pacific ocean, and to the Arctic sea. Others had rounded the Horn on the *Tonquin*, and still others had made the terrible journey with Astor's Overlanders and returned to the North by Thompson's route. On their annual journeys from Montreal they toiled over long portages, which led up and over high cliffs, on slippery steep banks and jagged rocks—the big canoes over-turned on the heads of some of them, the heavy packs on the backs of others—while they sang "Foot it lightly, Shepherdess"!

Lev' ton pied léger', bergère,
Lev' ton pied légèrement!

A hundred miles of water was a day's journey. But in the era of fierce competition, the *voyageurs'* paddles would dip on through the night, their songs floating on the wind into the darkness. There was always a song leader with a brigade, a tireless chanter with several hundred songs in his throat, which was made of material as durable as a bugle's.

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In his way, he was as important as the guide and the steersman. He was their White Leader, their spiritual support. On these racing trips, the men might snatch three or four hours sleep on the bank and embark again at dawn. There were times, out on the Great Lakes, when they did not put ashore for several days and nights. They chewed pemmican for meals, and sang, and kept themselves awake with song. No doubt, long journeys account for the interminable verses of *En Roulant ma boule* and *Allouette*.

Voyageurs made songs by hundreds but they were unlettered men and so they wrote no diaries. The best account of a *voyageur's* life, as he saw it himself, is given by Alexander Ross of Astoria and Saskatchewan, who questioned an old *homme du Nord*.

I have now been forty-two years in this country. For twenty-four I was a light canoe-man. I required little sleep but sometimes got less than required. No portage was too long for me; all portages were alike. My end of the canoe never touched the ground till I saw the end of the portage. Fifty songs a day were nothing to me. . . . I saved the lives of ten *bourgeois* and was always the favorite because, when others stopped to carry at a bad step, and lost time, I pushed on—over rapids, over cascades, over chutes, all were the same to me. No water, no weather; ever stopped the paddle or the song. I have had twelve wives in the country. . . . No *bourgeois* had better-dressed wives than I, no Indian chief better horses, no white man better-harnessed or swifter dogs. . . . There is no life so happy as a *voyageur's* life: none so independent; no place where a man enjoys so much variety and freedom as in the Indian country. *Huzza! huzza! pour le pays sauvage!*

The great brigades are no more. The cabins arose in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and along Simon Fraser's river;

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and the cabin builders needed steamboats, and iron rails and telegraph poles. No shy marten lives on telegraph poles. Even strong and willing Wolverine Person cannot carry off iron rails. What became of the *voyageurs*? Many of them drifted back to “Kébec,” to astonish the *habitants* with their tales and, doubtless, to be taught discretion by the *curés*, who would quickly censor some of their reminiscences. Many more remained on the prairies and were aided by their late employer, the Hudson’s Bay Company, in settling themselves among the cabin folk and—by a new turn of the old Norman adaptability—became farmers. *Voyageurs* homesteaded in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Oregon. But there were others who clung to the wild life. Singly, or in groups of three or four, each with his family, his canoe, his gun and traps and, usually, a surly dog, their descendants catch ermine, marten, beaver and mink along the northern streams of British Columbia, Alaska, Alberta, during the winter and take their catch to the nearest post of the Hudson’s Bay Company in the spring. The *voyageur*’s traits have not changed with his diminished scope. By comparison, the peacock is humility typified. Does he kill a moose Up There, on the Parsnip river? None with larger antlers ever roamed the forest! As for wolves, “there have never been any *small* wolves on my trail!” is a line from one of his songs.

Take leave of him now, in his happiest hour. His beloved *canot* is upturned on the bank. He lies with his shoulders propped against it, whiffing his *tabac*. He has done, for tonight, with fiddle and dance. He takes his rest. Between deep puffs, he concludes his recital of a dread danger on his recent trapping excursion from which only his truly miraculous talents saved him.

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"You seem surprised," he says, with an indifference as exaggerated as his tale, which he has been telling to the Chief Trader of the fur post at journey's end. "But you should know that, for me, this was nothing. Why not?" His chest swells as he answers his own "*pourquoi non?*" with the ancient, the proudest boast of his clan—"I am a man of the North!"

He smokes in silence for a time; while, to his half closed eyes, the flare of the camp fire and of the sunset's after-glow, fuse in one red glory, and all the pores of his body seem to open to the beneficent piny air. The glow fades from the horizon leaving a luminous green sky, which might be a sheen cast from the tops of the spring forest. There are a few stars, like white blossoms, large and bright. The *voyageur* lays aside his dead pipe and sings:

J'ai cueilli la belle rose
J'ai cueilli la belle rose
Qui pendait au rosier blanc:
La belle rose
Qui pendait au rosier blanc,
La belle rose du rosier blanc.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE list of sources and secondary material is not printed in full because of its length and because, possibly, one reader in a thousand ever studies any of the references listed in a bibliography. I think it pointless to print several hundred titles merely as a scholarly gesture.

Certain authorities, however, should be mentioned. Data regarding the colonial Fur Trade is contained in the Indian treaties and in the correspondence of traders and colonial officials scattered through thousands of printed pages in the official records of the Southern Colonies and of New York and Pennsylvania and in the *American Archives*. The documents concerning the French fish and fur traders before the founding of Canada are listed in the standard English work on the subject, *The Early Trading Companies of New France* by H. P. Biggar (University of Toronto Library). As to the North-West Company, for "flavor" as well as knowledge, there are Alexander Mackenzie's *General History of the Fur Trade* and his *Voyages*, David Thompson's *Narrative* edited by J. B. Tyrrell, chief of the Geographical Survey of Canada (Champlain Society, Toronto) and L. R. Masson's *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*; and the two recent valuable books by Professor H. A. Innis of the University of Toronto, *The North West Company*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

(Yale University Press 1931) and *Peter Pond* (Irwin & Gordon, Toronto 1932). The chief sources for the early history of Canada are the *Public Archives of Canada* and the publications of the Champlain Society including the journals of La Vérendrye, Champlain and other pioneer explorers; Parkman's Works, *The Chronicles of Canada* (Glasgow & Brook, Toronto) and the several books by William Bennett Monroe, Thomas Chapais and Lawrence J. Burpee are valuable. There is scant source material about the Hudson's Bay Company: for information and lively reading consult *Hearne's Journey and Documents Relating to the Early History of Hudson Bay*, edited by J. B. Tyrrell (Champlain Society) and *Fur Trade and Empire, George Simpson's Journal* edited by Professor Frederick Merk (Harvard Historical Studies) and the *Kelsey Papers*, (Ottawa 1929) published jointly by the *Public Archives of Canada* and the *Public Record Office of Northern Ireland*, and edited by Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist.

The point of view embodied in the title of this book is briefly suggested in the third chapter of *Pioneers of the Old Southwest* (1919) and in the fourth chapter of *Adventurers of Oregon* (1920) in the *Chronicles of America Series* (Yale University Press). These histories brought forth kind words from the late Frederick Jackson Turner, who seemed to feel that I had made a slight contribution in having retrieved the early colonial fur trader from obscurity to present him in his larger aspects as an imperial scout and a trail blazer for settlement. It seems to me that all "original" ideas on frontier history are in the works of Turner, himself; if not stated, then implied.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Therefore the first of my grateful acknowledgments is made to him. Though I knew him only through his helpful letters, I can best express my gratitude in quoting from Dr. Joseph Schafer's memorial address delivered before the Mississippi Valley Historical Association April 1932: "All can readily learn what Turner *did*; that is matter of record. What Turner *was* is known variously, and at best imperfectly, only to those who as students, friends, or professional associates had gained admittance to the treasure house of his mind and heart."

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For Indian lore some of my sources are my father's letters and jottings, and the knowledge gathered by other fur traders through long association with red men: other sources are the published translations made from the Cherokee by James Mooney, from the Iroquois by Harriet Converse, from the Chippewa by Frances Densmore and the books by James Willard Schultz about his adopted people, the Montana Blackfeet. I feel indebted for inspirations, as well as knowledge, to the interpretations of the Indian mind and spirit which I have found in the art or the writings of Te Ata (Chickasaw), Chief Standing Bear (Lakota) Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance (Blood-Blackfeet, Alberta) Dr. Arthur C. Parker (Seneca), John Joseph Mathews (Osage) and others. More Indian sources are listed in the bibliographical note appended to

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CONSTANCE LINDSAY SKINNER.

